

TOILERS OF THE SEA.

BY VICTOR HUGO,

Author of 'Notre Dame de Paris,' and 'Les Misérables.'

AUTHORIZED ENGLISH TRANSLATION,

BY W. MOY THOMAS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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I Dedicate this Book

TO THE

ROCK OF HOSPITALITY AND LIBERTY,

TO THAT PORTION OF OLD NORMAN GROUND

INHABITED BY

THE NOBLE LITTLE NATION OF THE SEA:

TO THE ISLAND OF GUERNSEY,

SEVERE YET KIND, MY PRESENT ASYLUM,

PERHAPS MY TOMB.

V. H.

PREFACE.

RELIGION, Society, and Nature ! these are the three struggles of man. They constitute at the same time his three needs. He has need of a faith ; hence the temple. He must create ; hence the city. He must live ; hence the plough and the ship. But these three solutions comprise three perpetual conflicts. The mysterious difficulty of life results from all three. Man strives with obstacles under the form of superstition, under the form of prejudice, and under the form of the elements. A triple *ἀνάγκη* weighs upon,

us. There is the fatality of dogmas, the oppression of human laws, the inexorability of nature. In '*Notre Dame de Paris*' the author denounced the first; in the '*Misérables*' he exemplified the second; in this book he indicates the third. With these three fatalities mingles that inward fatality—the supreme *ἀνάγκη*, the human heart.

HAUTEVILLE HOUSE,
March, 1866.

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FIRST PART.
SIEUR CLUBIN.

BOOK I.

THE HISTORY OF A BAD REPUTATION.



I.

A WORD WRITTEN ON A WHITE PAGE.

CHRISTMAS DAY in the year 182— was somewhat remarkable in the island of Guernsey. Snow fell on that day. In the Channel Islands a frosty winter is uncommon, and a fall of snow is an event.

On that Christmas morning, the road which skirts the seashore from Saint Peter's Port to the Vale was clothed in white. From midnight

till the break of day the snow had been falling. Towards nine o'clock, a little after the rising of the wintry sun, as it was too early yet for the Church of England folks to go to St. Sampson's, or for the Wesleyans to repair to Eldad Chapel, the road was almost deserted. Throughout that portion of the highway which separates the first from the second tower, only three foot-passengers could be seen. These were a child, a man, and a woman. Walking at a distance from each other, these wayfarers had no visible connection. The child, a boy of about eight years old, had stopped, and was looking curiously at the wintry scene. The man walked behind the woman, at a distance of about a hundred paces. Like her he was coming from the direction of the church of St. Sampson. The appearance of the man, who was still young, was something between that of a workman and a sailor. He wore his working-day clothes,—a kind of Guernsey shirt of coarse brown stuff, and trousers partly concealed by tarpaulin leggings,—a costume which seemed

to indicate that, notwithstanding the holy day, he was going to no place of worship. His heavy shoes of rough leather, with their soles covered with large nails, left upon the snow, as he walked, a print more like that of a prison lock than the foot of a man. The woman, on the contrary, was evidently dressed for church. She wore a large mantle of black silk, wadded, under which she had coquettishly adjusted a dress of Irish poplin, trimmed alternately with white and pink; but for her red stockings, she might have been taken for a Parisian. She walked on with a light and free step, so little suggestive of the burden of life that it might easily be seen that she was young. Her movements possessed that subtle grace which indicates the most delicate of all transitions,—that soft intermingling, as it were, of two twilights,—the passage from the condition of a child to that of womanhood. The man seemed to take no heed of her.

Suddenly, near a group of oaks at the corner of a field, and at the spot called the Basses

Maisons, she turned, and the movement seemed to attract the attention of the man. She stopped, seemed to reflect a moment, then stooped, and the man fancied that he could discern that she was tracing with her finger some letters in the snow. Then she rose again, went on her way at a quicker pace, turned once more, this time smiling, and disappeared to the left of the roadway, by the footpath under the hedges which leads to the Ivy Castle. When she had turned for the second time, the man had recognized her as Déruchette, a charming girl of that neighbourhood.

The man felt no need of quickening his pace; and some minutes later he found himself near the group of oaks. Already he had ceased to think of the vanished Déruchette; and if, at that moment, a porpoise had appeared above the water or a robin had caught his eye in the hedges, it is probable that he would have passed on his way. But it happened that his eyes were fixed upon the ground; his gaze fell mechanically upon the spot where the girl

had stopped. Two little footprints were there plainly visible; and beside them he read this word, evidently written by her in the snow,—

“GILLIATT.”

It was his own name.

He lingered for awhile motionless, looking at the letters, the little footprints, and the snow; and then walked on, evidently in a thoughtful mood.

II.

THE BÂT DE LA RUE.

GILLIATT lived in the parish of St. Sampson. He was not liked by his neighbours; and there were reasons for that fact.

To begin with, he lived in a queer kind of "haunted" dwelling. In the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, sometimes in the country, but often in streets with many inhabitants, you will come upon a house the entrance to which is completely barricaded. Holly bushes obstruct the doorway, hideous boards, with nails,

conceal the windows below; while the casements of the upper stories are neither closed nor open: for all the window-frames are barred, but the glass is broken. If there is a little yard, grass grows between its stones; and the parapet of its wall is crumbling away. If there is a garden, it is choked with nettles, brambles, and hemlock, and strange insects abound in it. The chimneys are cracked, the roof is falling in; so much as can be seen from without of the rooms presents a dismantled appearance. The woodwork is rotten; the stone mildewed. The paper of the walls has dropped away and hangs loose, until it presents a history of the bygone fashions of paper-hangings—the scrawling patterns of the time of the Empire, the crescent-shaped draperies of the Directory, the balustrades and pillars of the days of Louis XVI. The thick draperies of cobwebs, filled with flies, indicate the quiet reign long enjoyed by innumerable spiders. Sometimes a broken jug may be noticed on a shelf. Such houses are considered to be haunted. Satan is

popularly believed to visit them by night. Houses are like the human beings who inhabit them. They become to their former selves what the corpse is to the living body. A superstitious belief among the people is sufficient to reduce them to this state of death. Then their aspect is terrible. These ghostly houses are common in the Channel Islands.

The rural and maritime populations are easily moved with notions of the active agency of the powers of evil. Among the Channel Isles, and on the neighbouring coast of France, the ideas of the people, on this subject, are deeply rooted. In their view, Beelzebub has his ministers in all parts of the earth. It is certain that Belphegor is the ambassador from the infernal regions in France, Hutgin in Italy, Belial in Turkey, Thamuz in Spain, Martinet in Switzerland, and Mammon in England. Satan is an Emperor just like any other: a sort of Satan Cæsar. His establishment is well organized. Dagon is his grand almoner, Succor Benoth chief of the Eunuchs; Asmodeus,

banker at the gaming-table; Kobal, manager of the theatre, and Verdelet grand-master of the ceremonies. Nybbas is the court fool; Wierus, a savant, a good stryologue, and a man of much learning in demonology, calls Nybbas the great parodist.

The Norman fishermen, who frequent the Channel, have many precautions to take at sea, by reason of the illusions with which Satan environs them. It has long been an article of popular faith, that Saint Maclou inhabited the great square rock called Ortach, in the sea between Aurigny and the Casquets; and many old sailors used to declare that they had often seen him there, seated and reading in a book. Accordingly the sailors, as they passed, were in the habit of kneeling many times before the Ortach rock, until the day when the fable was destroyed, and the truth took its place. For it has been discovered, and is now well established, that the lonely inhabitant of the rock is not a saint, but a devil. This evil spirit, whose name is Jochmus, had the impudence to pass him-

self off, for many centuries, as Saint Maclou. Even the Church herself is not proof against snares of this kind. The demons Raguel, Oribel, and Tobiel, were regarded as saints until the year 745; when Pope Zachary, having at length exposed them, turned them out of saintly company. This sort of weeding of the saintly calendar, is certainly very useful; but it can only be practised by very accomplished judges of devils and their ways.

The old inhabitants of these parts relate—though all this refers to bygone times—that the Catholic population of the Norman Archipelago was once, though quite involuntarily, even in more intimate correspondence with the powers of darkness than the Huguenots themselves. How this happened, however, we do not pretend to say: but it is certain that the people suffered considerable annoyance from this cause. It appears that Satan had taken a fancy to the Catholics, and sought their company a good deal—a circumstance which has given rise to the belief that the Devil is

more Catholic than Protestant. One of his most insufferable familiarities consisted in paying nocturnal visits to married Catholics in bed, just at the moment when the husband had fallen fast asleep, and the wife had begun to doze : a fruitful source of domestic trouble. Patouillet was of opinion that a faithful biography of Voltaire ought not to be without some allusion to this practice of the Evil one. The truth of all this is perfectly well known, and described in the forms of excommunication in the rubric *de erroribus nocturnis et de semine diabolorum*. The practice was raging particularly at St. Helier's towards the end of the last century, probably as a punishment for the Revolution ; for the evil consequences of revolutionary excesses are incalculable. However this may have been, it is certain that this possibility of a visit from the demon at night, when it is impossible to see distinctly, or even in slumber, caused much embarrassment among orthodox dames. The idea of giving to the world a Voltaire, was by

no means a pleasant one. One of these, in some anxiety, consulted her confessor on this extremely difficult subject, and the best mode for timely discovery of the cheat. The confessor replied, 'In order to be sure that it is your husband by your side, and not a demon, place your hand upon his head. If you find horns, you may be sure there is something wrong.' But this test was far from satisfactory to the worthy dame.

Gilliatt's house had been haunted, but it was no longer in that condition; it was for that reason, however, only regarded with more suspicion. No one learned in demonology can be unaware of the fact, that when a sorcerer has installed himself in a haunted dwelling, the Devil considers the house sufficiently occupied, and is polite enough to abstain from visiting there; unless called in, like the doctor, on some special occasion.

This house was known by the name of the *Bû de la Rue*. It was situated at the extremity of a little promontory, rather of rock than of

land, forming a small harbourage apart in the creek of Houmet Paradis. The water at this spot is deep. The house stood quite alone upon the point, almost separated from the island, and with just sufficient ground about it for a small garden, which was sometimes inundated by the high tides. Between the port of St. Sampson and the creek of Houmet Paradis, rises a steep hill, surmounted by the block of towers covered with ivy, and known as Vale Castle, or the Château de l'Archange; so that, at St. Sampson, the Bû de la Rue was shut out from sight.

Nothing is commoner than sorcerers in Guernsey. They exercise their profession in certain parishes, in profound indifference to the enlightenment of the nineteenth century. Some of their practices are downright criminal. They set gold boiling, they gather herbs at midnight, they cast sinister looks upon the people's cattle. When the people consult them they send for bottles containing 'water of the sick,' and they are heard to mutter mysteriously 'the water has a sad look.' In March, 1857, one

of them discovered, in water of this kind, seven demons. They are universally feared. Another only lately bewitched a baker 'as well as his oven.' Another had the diabolical wickedness to wafer and seal up envelopes 'containing nothing inside.' Another went so far as to have on a shelf three bottles labelled 'B.' These monstrous facts are well authenticated. Some of these sorcerers are obliging, and for two or three guineas will take on themselves the complaint from which you are suffering. Then they are seen to roll upon their beds, and to groan with pain; and while they are in these agonies the believer exclaims, 'There! I am well again.' Others cure all kinds of diseases, by merely tying a handkerchief round their patients' loins, a remedy so simple that it is astonishing that no one had yet thought of it. In the last century, the Cour Royale of Guernsey, bound such folks upon a heap of fagots, and burnt them alive. In these days it condemns them to eight weeks' imprisonment, four weeks on bread and water,

and the remainder of the term in solitary confinement. *Amant alterna catenæ.*

The last instance of burning sorcerers in Guernsey took place in 1747. The city authorities devoted one of its squares, the Carrefour du Bordage, to that ceremony. Between 1565 and 1700, eleven sorcerers thus suffered at this spot. As a rule the criminals made confession of their guilt. The Carrefour du Bordage has indeed rendered many other services to society and religion. It was here that heretics were brought to the stake. Under Queen Mary, among other Huguenots burnt here, were a mother and two daughters. The name of this mother was Perrotine Massy. One of the daughters was *enceinte*, and was delivered of a child even in the midst of the flames. As the old chronicle expresses it, '*Son ventre éclata.*' The new-born infant rolled out of the fiery furnace. A man named House took it in his arms; but Helier Gosselin the bailli, like a good Catholic as he was, sternly commanded the child to be cast again into the fire.

III.

FOR YOUR WIFE: WHEN YOU MARRY.

WE must return to Gilliatt.

The country people told how, towards the close of the great Revolution, a woman, bringing with her a little child, came to live in Guernsey. She was an Englishwoman ; at least, she was not French. She had a name which the Guernsey pronunciation and, the country folks' bad spelling had finally converted into 'Gilliatt.' She lived alone with the child, which, according to some, was a nephew ; according to

others, a son; according to others, again, a strange child whom she was protecting. She had some means; enough to struggle on in a poor way. She had purchased a small plot of ground at La Sergentée, and another at La Roque Crespel, near Rocquaine. The house of the Bû de la Rue was haunted at this period. For more than thirty years no one had inhabited it. It was falling into ruins. The garden, so often invaded by the sea, could produce nothing. Besides noises and lights seen there at night-time, the house had this mysterious peculiarity: any one who should leave there in the evening, upon the mantelpiece, a ball of worsted, a few needles and a plate filled with soup, would assuredly find, in the morning, the soup consumed, the plate empty, and a pair of mittens ready knitted. The house, demon included, was offered for sale for a few pounds sterling. The stranger woman became the purchaser; evidently tempted by the devil, or by the advantageous bargain.

" She did more than purchase the house: she

took up her abode there with the child; and from that moment peace reigned within its walls. 'The Bû de la Rue has found a fit tenant,' said the country people. The haunting ceased. There was no longer any light seen there, save that of the tallow candle of the new comer. 'Witch's candle is as good as devil's torch.' The proverb satisfied the gossips of the neighbourhood.

The woman cultivated some acres of land which belonged to her. She had a good cow, of the sort which produces yellow butter. She gathered her white beans, cauliflowers, and 'Golden drop' potatoes. She sold, like other people, her parsnips by the tonneau, her onions by the hundred, and her beans by the denere. She did not go herself to market, but disposed of her crops through the agency of Guilbert Falliot, at the sign of the Abreveurs of Saint Sampson. The register of Falliot bears evidence that Falliot sold for her, on one occasion, as much as twelve bushels of rare early potatoes.

The house had been meanly repaired; but

sufficiently to make it habitable. It was only in very bad weather that the rain-drops found their way through the ceilings of the rooms. The interior consisted of a ground-floor suite of rooms, and a granary overhead. The ground-floor was divided into three rooms; two for sleeping, and one for meals. A ladder connected it with the granary above. The woman attended to the kitchen and taught the child to read. She did not go to church or chapel, which, all things considered, led to the conclusion that she must be French. Not to go to a place of worship! The circumstance was grave. In short, the new comers were a puzzle to the neighbourhood.

That the woman was French seemed probable. Volcanoes cast forth stones, and revolutions men, so families are removed to distant places; human beings come to pass their lives far from their native homes; groups of relatives and friends disperse and decay; strange people fall, as it were, from the clouds—some in Germany, some in England, some in America. The people of the country view them with surprise and

curiosity. Whence come these strange faces? Yonder mountain, smoking with revolutionary fires, casts them out. These barren *aërolites*, these famished and ruined people, these footballs of destiny, are known as refugees, *émigrés*, adventurers. If they sojourn among strangers, they are tolerated; if they depart, there is a feeling of relief. Sometimes these wanderers are harmless, inoffensive people, strangers—at least, as regards the women—to the events which have led to their exile, objects of persecution, helpless and astonished at their fate. They take root again somewhere as they can. They have done no harm to any one, and scarcely comprehend the destiny that has befallen them. So thus I have seen a poor tuft of grass uprooted and carried away by the explosion of a mine. No great explosion was ever followed by more of such strays than the first French Revolution.

The strange woman whom the Guernsey folks called ‘Gilliatt’ was, possibly, one of these human strays.

The woman grew older; the child became

a youth.. They lived alone and avoided by all; but they were sufficient for each other. *Louve et louveteau se pourcevaient*. This was another of the generous proverbs which the neighbourhood applied to them. Meanwhile, the youth grew to manhood; and then, as the old and withered bark falls from the tree, the mother died. She left to her son the little field of Sergentée, the small property called La Roque Crespel, and the house known as the Bû de la Rue; with the addition, as the official inventory said, of 'one hundred guineas in gold in the *'pid d'une cauche,*' that is to say, 'in the foot of a stocking.' The house was already sufficiently furnished with two oaken chests, two beds, six chairs and a table, besides necessary household utensils. Upon a shelf were some books, and in the corner a trunk, by no means of a mysterious character, which had to be opened for the inventory. This trunk was of drab leather, ornamented with brass nails and little stars of white metals, and it contained a bride's outfit, new and complete, of beautiful

Dunkirk linen,—chemises and petticoats, and some silk dresses,—with a paper on which was written, in the handwriting of the deceased,—

‘For your wife: when you marry.’

The loss of his mother was a terrible blow for the young man. His disposition had always been unsociable; he became now moody and sullen. The solitude around him was complete. Hitherto it had been mere isolation; now his life was a blank. While we have only one companion, life is endurable; left alone, it seems as if it is impossible to struggle on, and we fall back in the race, which is the first sign of despair. As time rolls on, however, we discover that duty is a series of compromises; we contemplate life, regard its end, and submit; but it is a submission which makes the heart bleed.

Gilliatt was young; and his wound healed with time. At that age sorrows cannot be lasting. His sadness, disappearing by slow degrees, seemed to mingle itself with the scenes

around him, to draw him more and more towards the face of nature, and further and further from the need of social converse; and, finally, to assimilate his spirit more completely to the solitude in which he lived.

IV.

AN UNPOPULAR MAN.

GILLIATT, as we have said, was not popular in the parish. Nothing could be more natural than that antipathy among his neighbours. The reasons for it were abundant. To begin with, as we have already explained, there was the strange house he lived in ; then there was his mysterious origin. Who could that woman have been ? and what was the meaning of this child ? Country people do not like mysteries, when they relate to strange

sojourners among them. Then his clothes were the clothes of a workman, while he had, although certainly not rich, sufficient to live without labour. Then there was his garden, which he succeeded in cultivating, and from which he produced crops of potatoes, in spite of the stormy equinoxes: and then there were the big books which he kept upon a shelf, and read from time to time.

More reasons: why did he live that solitary life? The Bû de la Rue was a Lazaretto, in which Gilliatt was kept in a sort of moral quarantine. This, in the popular judgment, made it quite simple that people should be astonished at his isolation, and should hold him responsible for the solitude which society had made around his home.

He never went to chapel. He often went out at night time. He held converse with sorcerers. He had been seen, on one occasion, sitting on the grass with an expression of astonishment on his features. He haunted the druidical stones of the Ancresse, and the fairy

caverns which are scattered about in that part. It was generally believed that he had been seen politely saluting the *Roque qui Chante*, or Crowing Rock. He bought all birds which people brought to him, and having bought them, set them at liberty. He was civil to the worthy folks in the streets of St. Sampson, but willingly turned out of his way to avoid them if he could. He often went out on fishing expeditions, and always returned with fish. He trimmed his garden on Sundays. He had a bagpipe which he had bought from one of the Highland soldiers who are sometimes in Guernsey, and on which he played occasionally at twilight, on the rocks by the sea-shore. He had been seen to make strange gestures, like those of one sowing seeds. What kind of treatment could be expected for a man like that?

As regards the books left by the deceased woman, which he was in the habit of reading, the neighbours were particularly suspicious. The Reverend Jaquemin Herode, rector of St. Sampson, when he visited the house at the time

of the woman's funeral, had read on the backs of these books the titles 'Rosier's Dictionary,' 'Candide,' by Voltaire. 'Advice to the People on Health,' by Tissot. A French noble, an Emigré, who had retired to St. Sampson, remarked that this Tissot 'must have been the Tissot who carried the head of the Princess de Lamballe upon a pike.'

The Reverend gentleman had also remarked upon one of these books, the highly fantastic and terribly significant title, '*De Rhubarbaro.*'

In justice to Gilliatt, however, it must be added that this volume being in Latin—a language which it is doubtful if he understood—the young man had possibly never read it.

But it is just those books which a man possesses, but does not read, which constitute the most suspicious evidence against him. The Spanish Inquisition have deliberated on that point, and have come to a conclusion which places the matter beyond further doubt.

The book in question, however, was no other than the Treatise of Doctor Tilingius upon the

Rhubarb plant, published in Germany in 1679.

It was by no means certain that Gilliatt did not prepare philters and unholy decoctions. He was undoubtedly in possession of certain phials.

Why did he walk abroad at evening, and sometimes even at midnight, on the cliffs? Evidently to hold converse with the evil spirits who, by night, frequent the sea-shores, enveloped in smoke.

On one occasion he had aided a witch at Torteval to clean her chaise: this was an old woman named Moutonne Gahy.

When a census was taken in the island, in answer to a question about his calling, he replied, 'Fisherman; when there are fish to catch.' Imagine yourself in the place of Gilliatt's neighbours, and admit that there is something unpleasant in answers like this.

Poverty and wealth are comparative terms. Gilliatt had some fields and a house, his own property; compared with those who had no-

thing, he was not poor. One day, to test this, and perhaps also as a step towards a correspondence—for there are base women who would marry a demon for the sake of riches—a young girl of the neighbourhood said to Gilliatt, ‘When are you going to take a wife, neighbour?’ He answered, ‘I will take a wife when the Roque qui Chante takes a husband.’

This Roque qui Chante is a great stone, standing in a field near Mons. Lemézurier de Fry’s. It is a stone of a highly suspicious character. No one knows what deeds are done around it. At times you may hear there a cock crowing, when no cock is near—an extremely disagreeable circumstance. Then it is commonly asserted that this stone was originally placed in the field by the elfin people known as *Sarregousets*, who are the same as the *Sins*.

At night, when it thunders, if you should happen to see men flying in the lurid light of the clouds, or on the rolling waves of the air, these are no other than the *Sarregousets*. A woman who lives at the Grand Mielles knows

them well. One evening, when some Sarregousets happened to be assembled at a cross-road, this woman cried out to a man with a cart, who did not know which route to take, 'Ask them your way. They are civil folks, and always ready to direct a stranger.' There can be little doubt that this woman was a sorceress.

The learned and judicious King James I. had women of this kind boiled, and then tasting the water of the cauldron, was able to say from its flavour, 'That was a sorceress;' or 'That was not one.'

It is to be regretted that the kings of these latter days no longer possess a talent which placed in so strong a light the utility of Monarchical institutions.

It was not without substantial grounds that Gilliatt lived in this odour of sorcery. One midnight, during a storm, Gilliatt being at sea alone in a bark, on the coast by La Sommeilleuse, he was heard to ask—

'Is there a passage sufficient for me?'

And a voice cried from the heights above :

‘Passage enough : steer boldly.’

To whom could he have been speaking, if not to those who replied to him? This seems something like evidence.

Another time, one stormy evening, when it was so dark that nothing could be distinguished, Gilliatt was near the Catiau Roque—a double row of rocks where witches, goats, and other diabolical creatures assemble and dance on Fridays—and here it is firmly believed, that the voice of Gilliatt was heard mingling in the following terrible conversation :—

‘How is Vesin Brovard?’ (This was a Mason who had fallen from the roof of a house.)

‘He is getting better.’

‘Ver dia! he fell from a greater height than that of yonder peak. It is delightful to think that he was not dashed to pieces.’

‘Our folks had a fine time for the seaweed gathering last week.’

‘Ay, finer than to-day.’

‘I believe you. There will be little fish at the market to-day.’

‘It blows too hard.’

‘They can’t lower their nets.’

‘How is Catherine?’

‘She is charming.’

Catherine was evidently the name of a Sarregouset.

According to all appearance, Gilliatt had business on hand at night; at least none doubted it.

Sometimes he was seen with a pitcher in his hand, pouring water on the ground. Now water, cast upon the ground, is known to make a shape like that of devils.

On the road to Saint Sampson, opposite the Martello tower number 1, stand three stones, arranged in the form of steps. Upon the platform of those stones, now empty, stood anciently a cross, or perhaps a gallows. These stones are full of evil influences.

Staid and worthy people, and perfectly credible witnesses, testified to having seen

Gilliatt at this spot conversing with a toad. Now there are no toads at Guernsey—the share of Guernsey in the reptiles of the channel isles, consisting exclusively of the snakes. It is Jersey that has all the toads. This toad, then, must have swum from the neighbouring island, in order to hold converse with Gilliatt. The converse was of a friendly kind.

These facts were clearly established ; and the proof is that the three stones are there to this day. Those who doubt it, may go and see them ; and at a little distance, there is also a house on which the passer-by may read this inscription :

‘DEALER IN CATTLE, ALIVE AND DEAD, OLD CORDAGE, IRON, BONES, AND TOBACCO FOR CHEWING, PROMPT PAYMENT FOR GOODS, AND EVERY ATTENTION GIVEN TO ORDERS.’

A man must be sceptical indeed to contest the existence of those stones, and of the house in question. Now both these circumstances were injurious to the reputation of Gilliatt.

Only the most ignorant are unaware of the fact that the greatest danger of the coasts of the channel islands is the King of the Aux-criniers. No inhabitant of the seas is more redoubtable. Whoever has seen him is certain to be wrecked between one St. Michel and the other. He is little, being in fact a dwarf; and is deaf, in his quality of king. He knows the names of all those who have been drowned in the seas, and the spots where they lie. He has a profound knowledge of that great graveyard which stretches far and wide beneath the waters of the ocean. A head, massive in the lower part and narrow in the forehead; a squat and corpulent figure; a skull, covered with warty excrescences; long legs, long arms, fins for feet, claws for hands, and a sea-green countenance; such are the chief characteristics of this king of the waves. His claws have palms like hands; his fins human nails. Imagine a spectral fish with the face of a human being. No power could check his career unless he could be exorcised, or mayhap, fished

up from the sea. Meanwhile he continues his sinister operations. Nothing is more unpleasant than an interview with this monster. Amid the rolling waves and breakers, or in the thick of the mist, the sailor perceives, sometimes, a strange creature with a beetle brow, wide nostrils, flattened ears, an enormous mouth, gap-toothed jaws, peaked eyebrows, and great grinning eyes. When the lightning is livid, he appears red; when it is purple, he looks wan. He has a stiff spreading beard, running with water, and overlapping a sort of pelerine, ornamented with fourteen shells, seven before and seven behind. These shells are curious to those who are learned in conchology. The king of the Auxcriniers is only seen in stormy seas. He is the terrible harbinger of the tempest. His hideous form traces itself in the fog, in the squall, in the tempest of rain. His breast is hideous. A coat of scales covers his sides like a vest. He rises above the waves which fly before the wind, twisting and curling like thin shavings of wood beneath the carpen-

ter's plane. Then his entire form issues out of the foam, and if there should happen to be in the horizon any vessels in distress, pale in the twilight, or his face lighted up with a sinister smile, he dances terrible and uncouth to behold. It is an evil omen indeed to meet him on a voyage.

At the period when the people of Saint Sampson were particularly excited on the subject of Gilliatt, the last persons who had seen the king of the Auxcriniers declared that his pelcrine was now ornamented with only thirteen shells. Thirteen! He was only the more dangerous. But what had become of the fourteenth? Had he given it to some one? No one would say positively; and folks confined themselves to conjecture. But it was an undoubted fact that a certain Mons. Lupin Mabier, of Godaines, a man of property, paying a good sum to the land tax, was ready to depose on oath, that he had once seen in the hands of Gilliatt a very remarkable kind of shell.

It was not uncommon to hear dialogues like the following among the country people.

‘I have a fine bull here, neighbour, what do you say?’

‘Very fine, neighbour.’

‘It is a fact? tho’ ’tis I who say it; he is better though for tallow than for meat.’

‘Ver dia!’

‘Are you sure that Gilliatt hasn’t cast his eye upon it?’

Gilliatt would stop sometimes beside a field where some labourers were assembled, or near gardens in which gardeners were engaged, and would perhaps hear these mysterious words.

‘When the *mors du diable* flourishes, reap the winter rye.’

(The *mors du diable* is the scabwort plant.)

‘The ash tree is coming out in leaf. There will be no more frost.’

‘Summer solstice, thistle in flower.’

‘If it rain not in June, the wheat will turn white. Look out for mildew.’

‘When the wild cherry appears, beware of *the full moon.*’

‘If the weather on the sixth day of the new moon is like that of the fourth, or like that of the fifth day, it will be the same nine times out of twelve in the first case, and eleven times out of twelve in the second, during the whole month.’

‘Keep your eye on neighbours who go to law with you. Beware of malicious influences. A pig which has had warm milk given to it will die. A cow which has had its teeth rubbed with leeks will eat no more.’

‘Spawning time with the smelts; beware of fevers.’

‘When frogs begin to appear, sow your melons.’

‘When the liverwort flowers, sow your barley.’

‘When the limes are in ‘bloom, mow the meadows.’

‘When the elm-tree flowers, open the hot-bed frames.’

‘When tobacco fields are in blossom, close your greenhouses.’

And, fearful to relate, these occult precepts were not without truth. Those who put faith in them could vouch for the fact.

One night, in the month of June, when Gilliatt was playing upon his bagpipe, upon the sandhills on the shore of the Demie de Fontenelle, it had happened that the mackerel fishing had failed.

One evening, at low water, it came to pass that a cart filled with sea-weed for manure overturned on the beach, in front of Gilliatt’s house. It is most probable that he was afraid of being brought before the magistrates, for he took considerable trouble in helping to raise the cart, and he filled it again himself.

A little neglected child of the neighbourhood being troubled with vermin, he had gone himself to St. Peter’s Port, and had returned with an ointment, with which he rubbed the child’s head. Thus Gilliatt had removed the pest from the poor child, which was an evidence

that Gilliatt himself had originally given it; for everybody knows that there is a certain charm for giving vermin to people.

Gilliatt was suspected of looking into wells—a dangerous practice with those who have an evil eye; and, in fact, at Arculons, near St. Peter's Port, the water of a well became unwholesome. The good woman to whom this well belonged said to Gilliatt:

‘Look here, at this water;’ and she showed him a glass full. Gilliatt acknowledged it.

‘The water is thick,’ he said; ‘that is true.’

The good woman, who dreaded him in her heart, said, ‘Make it sweet again for me.’

Gilliatt asked her some questions: whether she had a stable? whether the stable had a drain? whether the gutter of the drain did not pass near the well? The good woman replied ‘Yes.’ Gilliatt went into the stable; worked at the drain; turned the gutter in another direction; and the water became pure again. People in the country round might think what they pleased. A well does not become foul one

moment and sweet the next without good cause. The bottom of the affair was involved in obscurity; and, in short, it was difficult to escape the conclusion that Gilliatt himself had bewitched the water.

On one occasion, when he went to Jersey, it was remarked that he had taken a lodging in the street called the Rue des Alleurs. Now the word *alleurs* signifies spirits from the other world.

In villages it is the custom to gather together all these little hints and indications of a man's career; and when they are gathered together, the total constitutes his reputation among the inhabitants.

It happened that Gilliatt was once caught with blood issuing from his nose. The circumstance appeared grave. The master of a barque who had sailed almost entirely round the world, affirmed that among the Tongusians all sorcerers were subject to bleeding at the nose. In fact, when you see a man in those parts bleeding at the nose, you know at once what is in the

wind. Moderate reasoners, however, remarked that the characteristics of sorcerers among the Tongusians may possibly not apply in the same degree to the sorcerers of Guernsey.

In the environs of one of the St. Michels, he had been seen to stop in a close belonging to the Huriaux, skirting the highway from the Videclins. He whistled in the field, and a moment afterwards a crow alighted there; a moment later, a magpie. The fact was attested by a worthy man who has since been appointed to the office of Douzenier of the Douzaine, as those are called who are authorized to make a new survey and register of the fief of the king.

At Hamel, in the Vingtaine of L'Épine, there lived some old women who were positive of having heard one morning a number of swallows distinctly calling 'Gilliatt.'

Add to all this that he was of a malicious temper.

One day, a poor man was beating an ass. The ass was obstinate. The poor man gave

him a few kicks in the belly with his wooden shoe, and the ass fell. Gilliatt ran to raise the unlucky beast, but he was dead. Upon this Gilliatt administered to the poor man a sound thrashing.

Another day, Gilliatt seeing a boy come down from a tree with a brood of little birds, newly hatched and unfledged, he took the brood away from the boy, and carried his malevolence so far as even to take them back and replace them in the tree.

Some passers-by took up the boy's complaint; but Gilliatt made no reply, except to point to the old birds, who were hovering and crying plaintively over the tree, as they looked for their nest. He had a weakness for birds—another sign by which the people recognize a magician.

Children take a pleasure in robbing the nests of birds along the cliff. They bring home quantities of yellow, blue, and green eggs, with which they make rosaries for mantelpiece ornaments. As the cliffs are peaked, they

sometimes slip and are killed. Nothing is prettier than shutters decorated with sea-birds' eggs. Gilliatt's mischievous ingenuity had no end. He would climb, at the peril of his own life, into the steep places of the sea rocks, and hang up bundles of hay, old hats, and all kinds of scarecrows, to deter the birds from building there, and, as a consequence, to prevent the children from visiting those spots.

These are some of the reasons why Gilliatt was disliked throughout the country. Perhaps nothing less could have been expected.

V.

MORE SUSPICIOUS FACTS ABOUT GILLIATT.

PUBLIC opinion was not yet quite settled with regard to Gilliatt.

In general he was regarded as a *Marcou*: some went so far as to believe him to be a *Cambion*. A cambion is the child of a woman begotten by a devil.

When a woman bears to her husband seven male children consecutively, the seventh is a *marcou*. But the series must not be broken by the birth of any female child.

The marcou has a natural fleur-de-lys imprinted upon some part of his body ; for which *reason he has the power of curing scrofula, exactly the same as the kings of France.* Marcous are found in all parts of France, but particularly in the Orléanais. Every village of Gâtinais has its Marcou. It is sufficient for the cure of the sick, that the Marcou should breathe upon their wounds, or let them touch his fleur-de-lys. The night of Good Friday is particularly favourable to these ceremonies. Ten years ago there lived, at Ormes in Gâtinais, one of these creatures who was nicknamed the Beau Marcou, and consulted by all the country of Beauce. He was a cooper, named Foulon, who kept a horse and vehicle. To put a stop to his miracles, it was found necessary to call in the assistance of the gendarmes. His fleur-de-lys was on the left breast ; other marcous have it in different parts.

There are Marcous at Jersey, Aurigny, and at Guernsey. This fact is doubtless in some way connected with the rights possessed by

France over Normandy: or why the fleur-de-lys?

There are also in the channel islands, people afflicted with scrofula; which of course necessitates a due supply of these marcouis.

Some people, who happened to be present one day when Gilliatt was bathing in the sea, had fancied that they could perceive upon him a fleur-de-lys. Interrogated on that subject he made no reply, but merely burst into laughter. From that time, however, no one ever saw him bathe: he bathed thenceforth only in perilous and solitary places; probably by moonlight: a thing in itself somewhat suspicious.

Those who obstinately regarded him as a cambion, or son of the devil, were evidently in error. They ought to have known that cambions scarcely exist out of Germany. But The Vale and St. Sampson were, fifty years ago, places remarkable for the ignorance of their inhabitants.

To fancy that a resident of the island of

Guernsey could be the son of a devil was *evidently absurd*.

Gilliatt, for the very reason that he caused disquietude among the people, was sought for *and consulted*. *The peasants came in fear, to talk to him of their diseases. That fear itself had in it something of faith in his powers; for in the country, the more the doctor is suspected of magic, the more certain is the cure.* Gilliatt had certain remedies of his own, which he had inherited from the deceased woman. He communicated them to all who had need of them, and would never receive money for them. He cured whitlows with applications of herbs. A liquor in one of his phials allayed fever. The chemist of St. Sampson, or *pharmacien*, as they would call him in France, thought that this was probably a decoction of Jesuits' bark. The more generous among his censors, admitted that Gilliatt was not so bad á demon in his dealings with the ^{*}sick, so far as regarded his ordinary remedies. But in his character of a Marcou, he would do nothing. If persons

afflicted with scrofula came to him to ask to touch the fleur-de-lys on his skin, he made no other answer than that of shutting the door in their faces. He persistently refused to perform any miracles—a ridiculous position for a sorcerer. No one is bound to be a sorcerer; *but when a man is one, he ought not to shirk the duties of his position.*

One or two exceptions might be found to this almost universal antipathy. *Sieur Landoys*, of the *Clos-Landés*, was clerk and registrar of *St. Peter's Port*, custodian of the documents, and keeper of the register of births, marriages, and deaths. This *Landoys* was vain of his descent from *Peter Landoys*, treasurer of the province of *Brittany*, who was hanged in 1485. One day, when *Sieur Landoys* was bathing in the sea, he ventured to swim out too far, and was on the point of drowning: *Gilliatt* plunged into the water, narrowly escaping drowning himself, and succeeded in saving him. From that day *Landoys* never spoke an evil word of *Gil-*

liatt. To those who expressed surprise at this change, he replied, 'Why should I detest a man who never did me any harm, and who has rendered me a service?' The parish clerk and registrar even came at last to feel a sort of friendship for Gilliatt. This public functionary was a man without prejudices. He had no *faith in sorcerers. He laughed at people who went in fear of ghostly visitors. For himself,* he had a boat in which he amused himself by making fishing excursions in his leisure hours; but he had never seen anything extraordinary, unless it was on one occasion—a woman clothed in white, who rose about the waters in the light of the moon—and even of this circumstance he was not quite sure. Moutonne Gahy, the old witch of Torteval, had given him a little bag to be worn under the cravat, as a protection against evil spirits: he ridiculed the bag, and knew not what it contained, though, to be sure, he carried it about him, feeling more security with this charm hanging on his neck.

Some courageous persons, emboldened by the example of Landoys, ventured to cite, in Gilliatt's favour, certain extenuating circumstances; a few signs of good qualities, as his sobriety, his abstinence from spirits and tobacco; and sometimes they went so far as to pass this elegant eulogium upon him:—‘He neither smokes, drinks, chews tobacco, or takes snuff.’

Sobriety, however, can only count as a virtue when there are other virtues to support it.

The ban of public opinion lay heavily upon Gilliatt.

In any case, as a marcou, Gilliatt had it in his power to render great services. On a certain Good Friday, at midnight, a day and an hour propitious to this kind of cure, all the scrofulous people of the island, either by sudden inspiration, or by concerted action, presented themselves in a crowd at the Bû de la Rue, and with pitiable sores and imploring gestures, called on Gilliatt to make them clean. But he refused; and herein the people found another proof of his malevolence.

VI.

THE DUTCH SLOOP.

SUCH was the character of Gilliatt.

The young women considered him ugly.

Ugly he was not. He might, perhaps, have been called handsome. There was something in his profile of rude but antique grace. In repose it had some resemblance to that of a sculptured Dacian on the Trajan column. His ears were small, delicate, without lobes, and of an admirable form for hearing. Between his eyes he had that proud vertical line, which indicates,

in a man, boldness and perseverance. The corners of his mouth were depressed, giving a slight expression of bitterness. His forehead had a calm and noble roundness. The clear pupils of his eyes possessed a steadfast look, although troubled a little with that involuntary movement of the eyelids which fishermen contract from the glitter of the waves. His laugh was boyish and pleasing. No ivory could be of a finer white than his teeth; but exposure to the sun had made him swarthy as a moor. The ocean, the tempest, and the darkness cannot be braved with impunity. At thirty, he looked, already, like a man of forty-five. He wore the sombre mask of the wind and the sea.

The people had nicknamed him ‘Malicious Gilliatt.’

There is an Indian fable to the effect that one day the God Brahma, inquired of the Spirit of Power, ‘Who is stronger than thee?’ and the spirit replied, ‘Cunning.’ A Chinese proverb says, ‘What could not the lion

do, if he was the monkey also?' Gilliatt was neither the lion nor the monkey; but his actions gave some evidence of the truth of the Chinese proverb, and of the Hindoo fable. Although only of ordinary height and strength, he was enabled, so inventive, and powerful was his dexterity, to lift burdens that might have taxed a giant, and to accomplish feats which would have done credit to an athlete.

He had in him something of the power of the gymnast. He used, with equal address, his left hand and his right.

He never carried a gun; but was often seen with his net. He spared the birds, but not the fish. His knowledge and skill as a fisherman were, indeed, very considerable. He was an excellent swimmer.

Solitude either develops the mental powers, or renders men dull and vicious. Gilliatt sometimes presented himself under both these aspects. At times, when his features wore that air of strange surprise already mentioned, he might have been taken for a man of mental

powers scarcely superior to the savage. At other moments, an indescribable air of penetration lighted up his face. Ancient Chaldea possessed some men of this stamp. At certain times the dullness of the shepherd mind became transparent, and revealed the inspired sage.

After all, he was but a poor man; uninstructed, save to the extent of reading and writing. It is probable that the condition of his mind was at that limit which separates the dreamer from the thinker. The thinker wills, the dreamer is a passive instrument. Solitude sinks deeply into pure natures, and modifies them, in a certain degree. They become, unconsciously, penetrated with a kind of sacred awe. The shadow, in which the mind of Gil-liatt constantly dwelt, was composed in almost equal degrees of two elements, both obscure, but very different. Within himself all was ignorance and weakness; without, infinity and mysterious power.

By dint of frequent climbing on the rocks, of escalading the rugged cliffs, of going to and

fro among the islands in all weathers, of navigating any sort of craft which came to hand, of venturing night and day in difficult channels, he had become, without taking count of his other advantages, and merely in following his fancy and pleasure, a seaman of extraordinary skill.

He was a born pilot. The true pilot is the man who navigates the bed of the ocean even more than its surface. The waves of the sea are an external problem, continually modified by the submarine conditions of the waters in which the vessel is making her way. To see Gilliatt guiding his craft among the reefs and shallows of the Norman archipelago, one might have fancied that he carried in his head a plan of the bottom of the sea. He was familiar with it all, and feared nothing.

He was better acquainted with the buoys in the channels than the cormorants who make them their resting-places. The almost imperceptible differences which distinguish the four upright buoys of the Creux, Alligande, the

Trémies, and the Sardrette, were perfectly visible and clear to him, even in misty weather. He hesitated neither at the oval, apple-headed buoy of Anfré, nor at the triple iron point of the Rousse, nor at the white ball of the Corbette, nor at the black ball of Longue Pierre; and there was no fear of his confounding the cross of Goubeau with the sword planted in earth at La Platte, nor the hammer-shaped buoy of the Barbécs with the curled-tail buoy of the Moulinet.

His rare skill in seamanship *showed itself in a striking manner one day at Guernsey, on the occasion of one of those sea tournaments which are called regattas. The feat to be performed was to navigate alone a boat with four sails from St. Sampson to the Isle of Herm, at one league distance, and to bring the boat back from Herm to St. Sampson. To manage, without assistance, a boat with four sails, is a feat which every fisherman is equal to, and the difficulty seemed little; but there was a condition which rendered it far from

simple. The boat, to begin with, was one of those large and heavy sloops of bygone times which the sailors of the last century knew by the name of 'Dutch Belly Boats.' This ancient style of flat, pot-bellied craft, carrying on the larboard and starboard sides, in compensation for the want of a keel, two wings which lower themselves, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, according to the wind, may occasionally be met with still at sea. In the second place, there was the return from Herm, a journey which was rendered more difficult by a heavy ballasting of stones. The conditions were to go empty, but to return loaded. The sloop was the prize of the contest. It was dedicated beforehand to the winner. This 'Dutch Belly Boat' had been employed as a pilot-boat. The pilot who had rigged and worked it for twenty years was the most robust of all the sailors of the Channel. When he died, no one had been found capable of managing the sloop; and it was in consequence determined to make it the prize of the regatta. The sloop, though not

decked, had some sea qualities, and was a tempting prize for a skilful sailor. Her mast was somewhat forward, which increased the motive power of her sails, besides having the advantage of not being in the way of her pilot. It was a strong-built vessel, heavy, but roomy, and taking the open sea well; in fact, a good, serviceable craft. There was eager anxiety for the prize; the task was a rough one, but the reward of success was worth having. Seven or eight fishermen among the most vigorous of the island presented themselves. One by one they essayed, but not one could succeed in reaching Herm. The last one who tried his skill was known for having crossed, in a rowing boat, the terrible narrow sea between Sark and Brecq-Hou. Sweating with his exertions, he brought back the sloop, and said 'It is impossible.' Gilliatt then entered the bark, seized first of all the oar, then the mainsail, and pushed out to sea. Then, without either making fast the boom, which would have been imprudent, or letting it go, which kept the sail

under his direction, and leaving the boom to move with the wind without drifting, he held the tiller with his left hand. In three quarters of an hour he was at Herm. Three hours later, although a strong breeze had sprung up and was blowing across the roads, the sloop, guided by Gilliatt, returned to St. Sampson with its load of stones. He had, with an extravagant display of his resources, even added to the cargo the little bronze cannon at Herm, which the people were in the habit of firing off on the 5th of November, by way of rejoicing over the death of Guy Fawkes.

Guy Fawkes, by the way, has been dead one hundred and sixty years; a remarkably long period of rejoicing.

Gilliatt, thus burdened and encumbered, although he had the Guy Fawkes'-day cannon in the boat and the south wind in his sails, steered, or rather brought back, the heavy craft to St. Sampson.

Seeing which, Mess Lethierry exclaimed, 'There's a bold sailor for you!'

And he held out his hand to Gilliatt.

We shall have occasion to speak again of Mess Lethierry.

The sloop was awarded to Gilliatt.

This adventure detracted nothing from his evil reputation.

Several persons declared that the feat was not at all astonishing, for that Gilliatt had concealed in the boat a branch of wild medlar. But this could not be proved.

From that day forward, Gilliatt navigated no boat except the old sloop. In this heavy craft he went on his fishing avocation. He kept it at anchor in the excellent little shelter which he had all to himself, under the very wall of his house of the Bû de la Rue. At nightfall, he cast his nets over his shoulder, traversed his little garden, climbed over the parapet of dry stones, stepped lightly from rock to rock, and jumping into the sloop, pushed out to sea.

He brought home heavy takes of fish; but people said that his medlar branch was always

hanging up in the boat. No one had ever seen this branch, but every one believed in its existence.

When he had more fish than he wanted, he did not sell it, but gave it away.

The poor people took his gifts, but were little grateful, for they knew the secret of his medical branch. Such devices cannot be permitted. It is unlawful to trick the sea out of its treasures.

He was a fisherman ; but he was something more. He had, by instinct or for amusement, acquired a knowledge of three or four trades. He was a carpenter, worker in iron, wheelwright, boat-caulker, and, to some extent, an engineer. No one could mend a broken wheel better than he could. He manufactured, in a fashion of his own, all the things which fishermen use. In a corner of the Bû de la Rue he had a small forge and an anvil ; and the sloop having but one anchor, he had succeeded, without help, in making another. The anchor was excellent. The ring had the necessary

strength; and Gilliatt, though entirely uninstructed in this branch of the smith's art, had found the exact dimensions of the stock for preventing the over-balancing of the fluke ends.

He had patiently replaced all the nails in the planks by rivets; which rendered rust in the holes impossible.

In this way he had much improved the sea-going qualities of the sloop. He employed it sometimes when he took a fancy to spend a month or two in some solitary islet, like Chousey or the Casquets. People said 'Ay! ay! Gilliatt is away:' but this was a circumstance which nobody regretted.

VII.

A FIT TENANT FOR A HAUNTED HOUSE.

GILLIATT was a man of dreams, hence his daring, hence also his timidity. He had ideas on many things which were peculiarly his own.

There was in his character, perhaps, something of the visionary and the transcendentalist. Hallucinations may haunt the poor peasant like Martin, no less than the king like Henry IV. There are times when the unknown reveals itself in a mysterious way to the spirit

of man. A sudden rent in the veil of darkness will make manifest things hitherto unseen, and then close again upon the mysteries within. Such visions have occasionally the power to effect a transfiguration in those whom they visit. They convert a poor camel-driver into a Mahomet; a peasant girl tending her goats into a Joan of Arc. Solitude generates a certain amount of sublime exaltation. It is like the smoke arising from the burning bush. A mysterious lucidity of mind results, which converts the student into a seer, and the poet into a prophet: herein we find a key to the mysteries of Horeb, Kedron, Ombo; to the intoxication of Castalian laurels, the revelations of the month Busion. Hence, too, we have Peleia at Dodona, Phemonoe at Delphos, Trophonius in Lebadea, Ezekiel on the Chebar, and Jerome in the Thebais.

More frequently this visionary state overwhelms and stupefies its victim. There is such a thing as a divine besottedness. The Hindoo

fakir bears about with him the burden of his vision, as the Cretin his *goître*. Luther holding converse with devils in his garret at Wittenburg; Pascal shutting out the view of the infernal regions with the screen of his cabinet; the African Obi conversing with the white-faced God Bossum; are each and all the same phenomenon, diversely interpreted by the minds in which they manifest themselves, according to their capacity and power. Luther and Pascal were grand, and are grand still; the Obi is simply a poor half-witted creature.

Gilliatt was neither so exalted nor so low. He was a dreamer: nothing more.

Nature presented itself to him under a somewhat strange aspect.

Just as he had often found in the perfectly limpid water of the sea strange creatures of considerable size and of various shapes, of the medusa genus, which out of the water bore a resemblance to soft crystal, and which, cast again into the sea, became lost to sight in that

medium by reason of their identity in transparency and colour, so he imagined that other transparencies, similar to these almost invisible denizens of the ocean, might probably inhabit the air around us. The birds are scarcely inhabitants of the air, but rather amphibious creatures passing much of their lives upon the earth. Gilliatt could not believe the air a mere desert. He used to say, 'Since the water is filled with life, why not the atmosphere?' Creatures colourless and transparent like the air would escape from our observation. What proof have we that there are no such creatures? Analogy indicates that the liquid fields of air must have their swimming habitants, even as the waters of the deep. These aerial fish would, of course, be diaphanous; a provision of their wise creator for our sakes as well as their own. Allowing the light to pass through their forms, casting no shadow, having no defined outline, they would necessarily remain unknown to us, and beyond the grasp of human sense. Gilliatt indulged the wild

fancy that if it were possible to exhaust the earth of its atmosphere, or if we could fish the air as we fish the depths of the sea, we should discover the existence of a multitude of strange animals. And then, he would add in his reverie, many things would be made clear.

Reverie, which is thought in its nebulous state, borders closely upon the land of sleep, by which it is bounded as by a natural frontier. The discovery of a new world, in the form of an atmosphere filled with transparent creatures, would be the beginning of a knowledge of the vast unknown. But beyond opens out the illimitable domain of the possible, teeming with yet other beings, and characterized by other phenomena. All this would be nothing supernatural, but merely the occult continuation of the infinite variety of creation. In the midst of that laborious idleness, which was the chief feature in his existence, Gilliatt was singularly observant. He even carried his observations into the domain of sleep. Sleep

has a close relation with the possible, which we call also the *invraisemblable*. The world of sleep has an existence of its own. Night-time, regarded as a separate sphere of creation, is a universe in itself. The material nature of man, upon which philosophers tell us that a column of air forty-five miles in height continually presses, is wearied out at night, sinks into lassitude, lies down, and finds repose. The eyes of the flesh are closed; but in that drooping head, less inactive than is supposed, other eyes are opened. The unknown reveals itself. The shadowy existences of the invisible world become more akin to man; whether it be that there is a real communication, or whether things far off in the unfathomable abyss are mysteriously brought nearer, it seems as if the impalpable creatures inhabiting space come then to contemplate our natures, curious to comprehend the denizens of the earth. Some phantom creation ascends or descends to walk beside us in the dim twilight; some existence altogether different from our

own, composed partly of human consciousness, partly of something else, quits his fellows and returns again, after presenting himself for a moment to our inward sight; and the sleeper, not wholly slumbering, nor yet entirely conscious, beholds around him strange manifestations of life,—pale spectres, terrible or smiling, dismal phantoms, uncouth masks, unknown faces, hydra-headed monsters, undefined shapes, reflections of moonlight where there is no moon, vague fragments of monstrous forms. All these things which come and go in the troubled atmosphere of sleep, and to which men give the name of dreams, are, in truth, only realities invisible to those who walk about the daylight world.

So, at least, thought Gilliatt.

VIII.

THE GILD-HOLM-'UR SEAT.

THE curious visitor, in these days, would seek in vain in the little bay of Houmet for the house in which Gilliatt lived, or for his garden, or the creek in which he sheltered the Dutch sloop. The Bû de la Rue no longer exists. Even the little peninsula on which his house stood has vanished, levelled by the pickaxe of the quarryman, and carried away cart-load by cart-load, by dealers in rock and granite. It must be sought now in the

churches, the palaces, and the quays of a great city. All that ridge of rocks has been long ago conveyed to London.

These long lines of broken cliffs in the sea, with their frequent gaps and crevices, are like miniature chains of mountains. They strike the eye with the impression which a giant may be supposed to have in contemplating the Cordilleras. In the language of the country they are called 'Banques.' These banques vary considerable in form. Some resemble a long spine, of which each rock forms one of the vertebrae; others are like the back-bone of a fish; while some bear an odd resemblance to a crocodile in the act of drinking.

At the extremity of the ridge on which the Bû de la Rue was situate, was a large rock, which the fishing people, of Houmet called the 'Beast's Horn.' This rock, a sort of pyramid, resembled, though less in height, the 'Pinnacle' of Jersey. At high water the sea divided it from the ridge, and the Horn

stood alone ; at low water it was approached by an isthmus of rocks. The remarkable feature of the Beast's Horn was a sort of natural seat on the side next the sea, hollowed out by the water and polished by the rains. The seat, however, was a treacherous one. The stranger was insensibly attracted to it by 'the beauty of the prospect,' as the Guernsey folks said. Something detained him there in spite of himself, for there is a charm in a wide view. The seat seemed to offer itself for his convenience ; it formed a sort of niche in the peaked *jacquale* of the rock. To climb up to it was easy, for the sea, which had fashioned it out of its rocky base, had also cast beneath it, at convenient distances, a kind of natural stairs composed of flat stones. The perilous abyss is full of these snares ; beware, therefore, of its proffered aids. The spot was tempting : the stranger mounted and sat down. There he found himself at his ease ; for his seat he had the granite rounded and hollowed out by the foam ; for supports, two rocky elbows which

seemed made expressly for him ; against his back the high vertical wall of rock which he looked up to and admired, without thinking of the impossibility of scaling it. Nothing could be more simple than to fall into reverie in that convenient resting-place. All around spread the wide sea ; far off the ships were seen passing to and fro. It was possible to follow a sail with the eye, till it sank in the horizon beyond the Casquets. The stranger was entranced : he looked around, enjoying the beauty of the scene, and the light touch of wind and wave. There is a sort of bat found at Cayenne, which has the power of fanning people to sleep in the shade with a gentle beating of its dusky wings. Like this strange creature the wind wanders about, alternately ravaging or lulling into security. So the stranger would continue contemplating the sea, listening for a movement in the air, and yielding himself up to dreamy indolence. When the eyes are satiated with light and beauty, it is a luxury to close them for awhile. Suddenly the loiterer would

arouse; but it was too late. The sea had crept up step by step; the waters surrounded the rock; the stranger had been lured on to his death.

A terrible rock was this in a rising sea.

The tide gathers at first insensibly, then with violence; when it touches the rocks a sudden wrath seems to possess it, and it foams. Swimming is difficult in the breakers: excellent swimmers have been lost at the Horn of the Bû de la Rue.

In certain places, and at certain periods, the aspect of the sea is dangerous—fatal; as at times is the glance of a woman.

Very old inhabitants of Guernsey used to call this niche, fashioned in the rock by the waves, the ‘Gild-Holm-’Ur’ seat, or Kidormur; a Celtic word, say some authorities, which those who understand Celtic cannot interpret, and which all who understand French can—‘*Qui-dort-meurt*:’* such is the country folks’ translation.

* He who sleeps must die.

The reader may choose between the translation, *Qui-dort-meur*, and that given in 1819, I believe in *The Armorican*, by M. Athenas. According to this learned Celtic scholar, Gild-Holm-'Ur signifies 'The resting-place of birds.'

There is, at Aurigny, another seat of this kind, called the Monk's Chair, so well sculptured by the waves, and with steps of rock so conveniently placed, that it might be said that the sea politely sets a footstool for those who rest there.

In the open sea, at high water, the Gild-Holm-'Ur was no longer visible; the water covered it entirely.

The Gild-Holm-'Ur was a neighbour of the Bû de la Rue. Gilliatt knew it well, and often seated himself there. Was it his meditating place? No. We have already said he did not meditate, but dream. The sea, however, never entrapped him there.

BOOK II.

MESS LETHIERRY.



I.

A TROUBLED LIFE, BUT A QUIET CONSCIENCE.

MESS LETHIERRY, a conspicuous man in Saint Sampson, was a redoubtable sailor. He had voyaged a great deal. He had been a cabin-boy, seaman, topmast-man, second mate, mate, pilot, and captain. He was at this period a ship-owner. There was not a man to compare with him for general knowledge of the sea. He was brave in putting off to ships in distress. In foul weather he would

take his way along the beach, scanning the horizon. 'What have we yonder?' he would say; 'some craft in trouble?' Whether it were an interloping Weymouth fisherman, a cutter from Aurigny, a bisquine from Courseulle, the yacht of some nobleman, an English craft or a French one—poor or rich, mattered little. He jumped into a boat, called together two or three strong fellows, or did without them, as the case might be; pushed out to sea, rose and sank, and rose again on the rolling waves, plunged into the storm, and encountered the danger face to face. Then far off, amid the rain and lightning, and drenched with water, he was sometimes seen upright in his boat like a lion with a foaming mane. Often he would pass whole days in danger amidst the waves, the hail, and the wind, making his way to the sides of foundering vessels during the tempest, and rescuing men and merchandize. At night, after feats like these, he would return home, and pass his time in knitting stockings.

For fifty years he had led this kind of life— from ten years of age to sixty—so long did he feel himself still young. At sixty, he began to discover that he could no longer lift with one hand the great anvil at the forge at Varcin. This anvil weighed three hundred weight. At length rheumatic pains compelled him to be a prisoner; he was forced to give up his old struggle with the sea, to pass from the heroic into the patriarchial stage, to sink into the condition of a harmless, worthy old fellow.

Happily his rheumatic attacks happened at the period when he had secured a comfortable competency. These two consequences of labour are natural companions. At the moment when men become rich, how often comes paralysis—the sorrowful crowning of a laborious life.

Old and weary, men say among themselves, ‘let us rest and enjoy life.’

The population of islands like Guernsey, is composed of men who have passed their lives

in going about their little fields, or in sailing round the world. These are the two classes of the labouring people; the labourers on the land, and the toilers of the sea. Mess Lethierry was of the latter class; he had had a life of hard work. He had been upon the continent; was for some time a ship carpenter at Rochefort, and afterwards at Cette. We have just spoken of sailing round the world; he had made the circuit of all France, getting work as a journeyman carpenter; and had been employed at the salt works of Franche-Comté. Though a humble man, he had led a life of adventure. In France he had learned to read, to think, to have a will of his own. He had had a hand in many things, and in all he had done had kept a character for probity. At bottom, however, he was simply a sailor. The water was his element; he used to say that he lived with the fish when really at home. In short, his whole existence, except two or three years, had been devoted to the ocean. Flung into the water, as he said,

he had navigated the great oceans both of the Atlantic and the Pacific, but he preferred the Channel. He used to exclaim enthusiastically, 'That is the sea for a rough time of it!' He was born at sea, and at sea would have preferred to end his days. After sailing several times round the world, and seeing most countries, he had returned to Guernsey, and never permanently left the island again. Henceforth his great voyages were to Granville and St. Malo.

Mess Lethierry was a Guernsey man—that peculiar amalgamation of Frenchman and Norman, or rather English. He had within himself this quadruple extraction, merged and almost lost in that far wider country, the ocean. Throughout his life, and wheresoever he went, he had preserved the habits of a Norman fisherman.

All this, however, did not prevent his looking now and then into some old book; of taking pleasure in reading, in knowing the names of philosophers and poets, and in talking a little now and then in all languages.

II.

A CERTAIN PREDILECTION.

GILLIATT had in his nature something of the uncivilized man ; Mess Lethierry had the same.

Lethierry's uncultivated nature, however, were not without certain refinements.

He was fastidious upon the subject of women's hands. In his early years, while still a lad, passing from the stage of cabin-boy to that of sailor, he had heard the Admiral de Suffren say, 'There goes a pretty girl ; but what.

horrible great red hands.' An observation from an admiral on any subject is a command, a law, an authority far above that of an oracle. The exclamation of Admiral de Suffren had rendered Lethierry fastidious and exacting in the matter of small and white hands. His own hand, a large club fist of the colour of mahogany, was like a mallet or a pair of pincers for a friendly grasp, and tightly closed would almost break a paving stone.

He had never married; he had either no inclination for matrimony, or had never found a suitable match. That, perhaps, was due to his being a stickler for hands like those of a duchess. Such hands are indeed somewhat rare among the fishermen's daughters at Portbail.

It was whispered, however, that at Rochefort, on the Charente, he had, once upon a time, made the acquaintance of a certain grisette realizing his ideal. She was a pretty girl with graceful hands; but she was a vixen, and had also a habit of scratching. Woe betide anyone

who attacked her ; yet her nails, though capable at a pinch of being turned into claws, were of a whiteness which left nothing to be desired. It was these peculiarly bewitching nails which had *first enchanted and then disturbed the peace of Lethierry*, who, fearing that he might one day become no longer master of his mistress, had decided not to conduct that young lady to the nuptial altar.

Another time he met at Aurigny a country girl, who pleased him. He thought of marriage, when one of the inhabitants of the place said to him, ‘I congratulate you ; you will have for your wife a good fuel maker.’ Lethierry asked the meaning of this. It appeared that the country people at Aurigny have a certain custom of collecting manure from their cow-houses, which they throw against a wall, where it is left to dry and fall to the ground. Cakes of dried manure of this kind are used for fuel, and are called *coipiaux*. A country girl of Aurigny has no chance of getting a husband if she is not a good fuel maker ; but the young

lady's special talent only inspired disgust in Lethierry.

Besides, he had in his love matters a kind of rough country folks' philosophy, a sailorlike sort of habit of mind. Always smitten but never enslaved, he boasted of having been in his youth easily conquered by a petticoat, or rather a '*cotillon*;' for what is now-a-days called a crinoline, was in his time called a *cotillon*; a term, which in his use of it, signifies both something more and something less than a wife.

The rude seafaring men of the Norman archipelago have a certain amount of shrewdness. Almost all can read and write. On Sundays little cabin boys may be seen in those parts, seated upon a coil of ropes, reading, with book in hand. From all time these Norman sailors have had a peculiar satirical vein, and have been famous for clever sayings. It was one of these men, the bold pilot Quéripel, who said to Montgomery, when he sought refuge in Jersey after the unfortunate accident in killing Henry II.

at a tournament, with a blow of his lance, '*Tête folle a cassé tête vide.*' Another, one Touzeau, a sea captain at Saint Brelade, was the author of that philosophical pun, erroneously attributed to Camus, '*Après la mort, les papes deviennent papillons, et les sires deviennent cirons.*'

The mariners of the Channel are the true ancient Gauls. The islands, which in these days become rapidly more and more English, preserved for many ages their old French character. The peasant in Sark speaks the language of Louis XIV. Forty years ago, the old classical nautical language was to be found in the mouths of the sailors of Jersey and Aurigny. When amongst them, it was possible to imagine oneself carried back to the sea life of the seventeenth century. From that speaking trumpet which terrified Admiral Hilde, a philologist might have learnt the 'ancient technicalities of manœuvring and giving orders at sea, in the very words which were roared out to his sailors by Jean Bart. The old French

marine vocabulary is now almost entirely changed, but was still in use in Jersey in 1820.

It was with this uncouth sea dialect in his mouth that Duquesne beat De Ruyter, that Duguay Trouin defeated Wasnaer, and that Tourville, in 1681, poured a broadside into the first galley which bombarded Algiers. It is now a dead language. The idiom of the sea is altogether different. Duperré would not have been able to understand Suffren.

The language of French naval signals is not less transformed; there is a long distance between the four pennants, red, white, yellow, and blue, of Labourdonnaye, and the eighteen flags of these days, which, hoisted two and two, three and three, or four and four, furnish, for distant communication, sixty-six thousand combinations, are never deficient, and, so to speak, foresee the unforeseen.

III.

MESS LETHIERRY'S VULNERABLE PART.

MESS LETHIERRY'S heart and hand were always ready—a large heart and a large hand. His failing was that admirable one, self-confidence. He had a certain fashion of his own of undertaking to do a thing. It was a solemn fashion. He said, 'I give my word of honour to do it, with God's help.' That said, he went through with his duty. He put his faith in God, nothing more. The little that he went to church was

merely formal. At sea, he was superstitious.

Nevertheless, the storm had never yet arisen which could daunt him. One reason of this was his impatience of opposition. He could tolerate it neither from the ocean nor from anything else. He meant to have his way ; so much the worse for the sea if it thwarted him. It might try, if it would, but Mess Lethierry would not give in. A refractory wave could no more stop him than an angry neighbour. What he had said was said ; what he planned out was done. He bent neither before an objection nor before the tempest. The word 'no' had no existence for him, whether it was in the mouth of a man or in the angry muttering of a thunder cloud. In the teeth of all he went on in his way. He would take no refusals. Hence his obstinacy in life, and his intrepidity on the ocean.

He seasoned his simple meal of fish soup for himself, knowing the quantities of pepper, salt, and herbs which it required, and was as well

pleased with the cooking as with the meal. To complete the sketch of Lethierry's peculiarities, the reader must conceive a being to whom the putting on of a surtout would amount to a transfiguration ; whom a landsman's great-coat would convert into a strange animal ; one who, standing with his locks blown about by the wind, might have represented old Jean Bart, but who, in the landsman's round hat, would have looked an idiot ; awkward in cities, wild and redoubtable at sea ; a man with broad shoulders, fit for a porter ; one who indulged in no oaths, was rarely in anger, whose voice had a soft accent, which became like thunder in a speaking-trumpet ; a peasant who had read something of the philosophy of Diderot and D'Alembert ; a Guernsey man who had seen the Great Revolution ; a learned ignoramus, free from bigotry, but indulging in visions, with more faith in the White Lady than in the Holy Virgin ; possessing the strength of Polyphemus, the perseverance of Columbus, with a little of the bull in his nature, and a little of the child.

Add to these physical and mental peculiarities a somewhat flat nose, large cheeks, a set of teeth still perfect, a face filled with wrinkles, and which seemed to have been buffeted by the waves and subjected to the beating of the winds of forty years, a brow in which the storm and tempest were plainly written—an incarnation of a rock in the open sea. Add to this, too, a good-tempered smile always ready to light up his weatherbeaten countenance, and you have before you Mess Lethierry.

Mess Lethierry had two special objects of affection only. Their names were Durande and Déruchette.

BOOK III.

DURANDE AND DÉRUCHETTE.



I.

PRATTLE AND SMOKE.

THE human body might well be regarded as a mere simulacrum ; but it envelops our reality, it darkens our light, and broadens the shadow in which we live. The soul is the reality of our existence. Strictly speaking, the human visage is a mask. The true man is that which exists under what is called man. If that being, which thus exists sheltered and,

secreted behind that illusion which we call the flesh, could be approached, more than one strange revelation would be made. The vulgar error is to mistake the outward husk for the living spirit. Yonder maiden, for example, if we could see her as she really is, might she not figure, as some bird of the air?

A bird transmuted into a young maiden, what could be more exquisite? Picture it in your own home, and call it Déruchette. Delicious creature! One might be almost tempted to say, ‘Good morning, Mademoiselle Goldfinch.’ The wings are invisible, but the chirping may still be heard. Sometimes, too, she pipes a clear, loud song. In her child-like prattle, the creature is, perhaps, inferior; but in her song, how superior to humanity. When womanhood dawns, this angel flies away; but sometimes returns, bringing back a little one to a mother. Meanwhile, she who is one day to be a mother is for a long while a child; the girl becomes a maiden, fresh and joyous as the lark. Noting her movements, we feel as if

it was good of her not to fly away. The dear familiar companion moves at her own sweet will about the house, flits from branch to branch, or rather from room to room; goes to and fro; approaches and retires; plumes her wings, or rather combs her hair, and makes all kinds of gentle noises—murmurings of unspeakable delight to certain ears. She asks a question, and is answered; is asked something in return, and chirps a reply. It is delightful to chat with her when tired of serious talk; for this creature carries with her something of her skyey element. She is a thread of gold interwoven with your sombre thoughts; you feel almost grateful to her for her kindness in not making herself invisible, when it would be so easy for her to be even impalpable; for the beautiful is a necessary of life. There is, in this world, no function more important than that of being charming. The forest-glade would be incomplete without the humming-bird. To shed joy around, to radiate happiness, to cast light upon dark days, to be the golden thread

of our destiny, and the very spirit of grace and harmony, is not this to render a service? Does not beauty confer a benefit upon us, even by the simple fact of being beautiful? Here *and there we meet with one who possesses that fairy-like power of enchanting all about her*; sometimes she is ignorant herself of this magical influence, which is, however, for that reason, only the more perfect. Her presence lights up the home; her approach is like a cheerful warmth: she passes by, and we are content; she stays awhile, and we are happy. To behold her is to live: she is the Aurora with a human face. She has no need to do more than simply to be: she makes an Eden of the house; Paradise breathes from her; and she communicates this delight to all, without taking any greater trouble than that of existing beside them. Is it not a thing divine to have a smile which, none know how, has the power to lighten the weight of that enormous chain which all the living, in common, drag behind them? Déruchette possessed this smile: we may even

say that this smile was Déruchette herself. There is one thing which has more resemblance to ourselves even than our face, and that is our expression: but there is yet another thing which more resembles us than this, and that is our smile. Déruchette smiling was simply Déruchette.

There is something peculiarly attractive in the Jersey and Guernsey race. The women, particularly the young, are remarkable for a pure and exquisite beauty. Their complexion is a combination of the Saxon fairness, with the proverbial ruddiness of the Norman people—rosy cheeks and blue eyes; but the eyes want brilliancy. The English training dulls them. Their liquid glances will be irresistible whenever the secret is found of giving them that depth which is the glory of the Parisienne. Happily Englishwomen are not yet quite transformed into the Parisian type. Déruchette was not a Parisian; yet she was certainly not a Guernesiaise. Lethierry had brought her up to be neat and delicate and pretty; and so she was.

Déruchette had, at times, an air of bewitching languor, and a certain mischief in the eye which were altogether involuntary. She scarcely knew, perhaps, the meaning of the word love, and yet not unwillingly ensnared those about her in the toils. But all this in her was innocent. She had never thought of marrying.

Déruchette had the prettiest little hands in the world, and little feet to match them. Sweetness and goodness reigned throughout her person; her family and fortune were her uncle Mess Lethierry; her occupation was only to live her daily life; her accomplishments were the knowledge of a few songs; her intellectual gifts were summed up in her simple innocence; she had the graceful repose of the West Indian woman, mingled at times with giddiness and vivacity, with the teasing playfulness of a child, yet with a dash of melancholy. Her dress was somewhat rustic, and like that peculiar to her country—elegant, though not in accordance with the fashions of great cities;

for she wore flowers in her bonnet all the year round. Add to all this an open brow, a neck supple and graceful, chesnut hair, a fair skin slightly freckled with exposure to the sun, a mouth somewhat large, but well-defined, and visited from time to time by a dangerous smile. This was Déruchette.

Sometimes, in the evening, a little after sunset, at the moment when the dusk of the sky mingles with the dusk of the sea, and twilight invests the waves with a mysterious awe, the people beheld, entering the harbour of St. Sampson, upon the dark rolling waters, a strange, undefined thing—a monstrous form which puffed and blew; a horrid machine which roared like a wild beast, and smoked like a volcano; a species of *Ilydra* foaming among the breakers, and leaving behind it a dense cloud, as it rushed on towards the town with a frightful beating of its fins, and a throat belching forth flame. This was Durande.

II.

THE OLD STORY OF UTOPIA.

A STEAMBOAT was a prodigious novelty in the waters of the Channel in 182-. The whole coast of Normandy was long strangely excited by it. Now-a-days, ten or a dozen steam vessels, crossing and recrossing within the bounds of the horizon, scarcely attract a glance from loiterers on the shore. At the most, some persons, whose interest or business it is to note such things, will observe the indications in their smoke, of whether they

burn Welsh or Newcastle coal. They pass, and that is all. Welcome, if coming home ; 'a pleasant passage,' if outward bound.

Folks were less calm on the subject of these wonderful inventions in the first quarter of the present century ; and the new and strange machines, and their long lines of smoke, were regarded with no good-will by the Channel islanders. In that Puritanical Archipelago, where the Queen of England has been censured for violating the Scriptures* by using chloroform during her accouchements, the first steam-vessel which made its appearance received the name of the 'Devil Boat.' In the eyes of these worthy fishermen, once Catholics, now Calvinists, but always bigots, it seemed to be a portion of the infernal regions which had been somehow set afloat. A local preacher selected for his discourse the question of 'Whether man has the right to make fire and water work together when God had divided them.†' This beast, composed of iron and

* Genesis, chap. iii. v. 16.

† Genesis, chap. i. v. 4.

fire, did it not resemble leviathan? Was it not an attempt to bring chaos again into the universe? This is not the only occasion on which the progress of civilization has been stigmatized as a return to chaos.

‘A mad notion, a gross delusion, an absurdity!’ Such was the verdict of the Academy of Sciences when consulted by Napoleon, on the subject of steam-boats, early in the present century. The poor fishermen of St. Sampson may be excused for not being, in scientific matters, any wiser than the mathematicians of Paris; and in religious matters, a little island like Guernsey is not bound to be more enlightened than a great continent like America. In the year 1807, when the first steamboat of Fulton, commanded by Livingston, furnished with one of Watt’s engines, sent from England, and manœuvred besides her ordinary crew by two Frenchmen only, André Michaux and another, made her first voyage from New York to Albany, it happened that she set sail on the 17th of August. The Methodists

took up this important fact, and in numberless chapels, preachers were heard calling down a malediction on the machine, and declaring that this number 17 was no other than the total of the ten horns and seven horns of the beast in the Apocalypse. In America, they invoked against the steam-boats the beast from the book of Revelation ; in Europe, the reptile of the book of Genesis. That was the simple difference.

The savants had rejected steamboats as impossible ; the priests had anathematized them as impious. Science had condemned, and religion consigned them to perdition. Fulton was a new incarnation of Lucifer. The simple people on the coasts and in the villages were confirmed in their prejudice by the uneasiness which they felt at the outlandish sight. The religious view of steamboats may be summed up as follows : Water and fire were divorced at the creation. This divorce was enjoined by God himself. Man has no right to join what his Maker has put asunder ; to

reunite what he has dis-united. The peasants' view was simply, 'I don't like the look of' this thing.'

No one but Mess Lethierry, perhaps, could have been found at that early period daring enough to dream of such an enterprise as the establishment of a steam-vessel between Guernsey and St. Malo. He alone, as an independent thinker, was capable of conceiving such an idea, or, as a hardy mariner, of carrying it out. The French part of his nature, probably, conceived the idea; the English part supplied the energy to put it in execution.

How and when this was, we are about to inform the reader.

III.

RANTAINÉ.

ABOUT forty years before the period of the commencement of our narrative, there stood in the suburbs of Paris, near the city wall, between the Fosse-aux-Loups and the Tombe-Issoire, a house of doubtful reputation. It was a lonely, ruinous building, evidently a place for dark deeds on an occasion. Hère lived with his wife and child a species of town bandit; a man who had been clerk to an attorney practising at the Châtelet—he figured somewhat

later at the Assize Court. The name of this family was Rantaine. On a mahogany chest of drawers in the old house were two china cups, ornamented with flowers, on one of which appeared, in gilt letters, the words, 'A souvenir of friendship;' on the other, 'A token of esteem.' The child lived in an atmosphere of vice in this miserable home. The father and mother having belonged to the lower middle class, the boy had learnt to read, and they brought him up in a fashion. The mother, pale and almost in rags, gave 'instruction,' as she called it, mechanically to the little one, heard it spell a few words to her, and interrupted the lesson to accompany her husband on some criminal expedition, or to earn the wages of prostitution. Meanwhile, the book remained open on the table as she had left it, and the boy sat beside it, meditating in his way.

The father and mother, detected one day in one of their criminal enterprises, suddenly vanished into that obscurity in which the penal

laws envelop convicted malefactors. The child, too, disappeared.

Lethierry in his wanderings about the world stumbled one day on an adventurer like himself; helped him out of some scrape; rendered him a kindly service, and was apparently repaid with gratitude. He took a fancy to the stranger, picked him up, and brought him to Guernsey, where, finding him intelligent in learning the duties of a sailor aboard a coasting vessel, he made him a companion. This stranger was the little Rantaine, now grown up to manhood.

Rantaine, like Lethierry, had a bull neck, a large and powerful breadth of shoulders for carrying burdens, and loins like those of the Farnese Hercules. Lethierry and he had a remarkable similarity of appearance: Rantaine was the taller. People who saw their forms behind as they were walking side by side along the port, exclaimed, "There are 'two brothers.' On looking them in the face the effect was different: all that was open in the countenance of Lethierry was reserved and cautious

in that of Rantaine. Rantaine was an expert swordsman, played on the harmonica, could snuff a candle at twenty paces with a pistol-ball, could strike a tremendous blow with the fist, recite verses from Voltaire's 'Henriade,' and interpret dreams; he knew by heart '*Les Tombeaux de Saint Denis*,' by Trenenil. He talked sometimes of having had relations with the Sultan of Calicut, 'whom the Portuguese call the Zamorin.' If any one had seen the little memorandum-book which he carried about with him, he would have found notes and jottings of this kind:—'At Lyons in a fissure of the wall of one of the cells in the prison of St. Joseph, a file.' He spoke always with a grave deliberation; he called himself the son of a Chevalier de Saint Louis. His linen was of a miscellaneous kind, and marked with different initials. Nobody was ever more tender than he was on the point of honour; he fought and killed his man. The mother of a pretty actress could not have an eye more watchful for an insult.

He might have stood for the personification of subtlety under an outer garb of enormous strength.

It was the power of his fist, applied one day at a fair upon a *cabeza de moro*, which had originally taken the fancy of Lethierry. No one in Guernsey knew anything of his adventures. They were of a chequered kind. If the great theatre of destiny had a special wardrobe, Rantaine ought to have taken the dress of harlequin. He had lived, and had seen the world. He had run through the gamut of possible trades and qualities; had been a cook at Madagascar, trainer of birds at Honolulu, a religious journalist at the Galapagos Islands, a poet at Oomrawuttee, a freemason at Haïti. In this latter character he had delivered at Grand Goave a funeral oration, of which the local journals have preserved this fragment:—‘Farewell, then, noble spirit! In the azure vault of the heavens, where thou wingest now thy flight, thou wilt no doubt rejoin the good Abbé Leander Crameau, of Little Goave. Tell

him that, thanks to ten years of glorious efforts, thou hast completed the church of the Anse-à-Veau. Adieu! transcendent genius, model mason!’ His freemason’s mask did not prevent him, as we see, wearing a little of the Roman Catholic. The former won to his side the men of progress, and the latter the men of order. He declared himself a white of pure caste, and hated the negroes; though for all that, he would certainly have been an admirer of the Emperor Soulouque. In 1815, at Bordeaux, the glow of his royalist enthusiasm broke forth in the shape of a huge white feather in his cap. His life had been a series of eclipses, of appearances, disappearances, and reappearances. He was a sort of revolving light upon the coasts of scampdom. He knew a little Turkish: instead of ‘guillotined’ would say ‘néboissé.’ He had been a slave in Tripoli, in the house of a Thaleb, and had learnt Turkish by dint of blows with a stick. His employment had been to stand at evenings at the doors of the mosque, there to read aloud to the faithful the Koran inscribed

upon slips of wood, or pieces of camel leather. It is not improbable that he was a renegade.

He was capable of everything, and something worse.

He had a trick of laughing loud and knitting his brows at the same time. He used to say, 'In politics, I esteem only men inaccessible to influences;' or, 'I am for decency and good morals;' or, 'The pyramid must be replaced upon its base.' His manner was rather cheerful and cordial than otherwise. The expression of his mouth contradicted the sense of his words. His nostrils had an odd way of distending themselves. In the corners of his eyes he had a little network of wrinkles, in which all sorts of dark thoughts seemed to meet together. It was here alone that the secret of his physiognomy could be thoroughly studied. His flat foot was a vulture's claw. His skull was low at the top and large about the temples. His ill-shapen ear, bristling with hair, seemed to say, 'Beware of speaking to the animal in this cave.'

One fine day in Guernsey, Rantaine was suddenly missing.

Lethierry's partner had absconded, leaving the treasury of their partnership empty.

In this treasury there was some money of Rantaine's, no doubt, but there were also fifty thousand francs belonging to Lethierry.

By forty years of industry and probity as a coaster and ship carpenter, Lethierry had saved one hundred thousand francs. Rantaine robbed him of half the sum.

Half ruined, Lethierry did not lose heart, but began at once to think how to repair his misfortune. A stout heart may be ruined in fortune, but not in spirit. It was just about that time that people began to talk of the new kind of boat to be moved by steam-engines. Lethierry conceived the idea of trying Fulton's invention, so much disputed about; and by one of these fireboats to connect the Channel Islands with the French coast. He staked his all upon this idea; he devoted to it the wreck of his savings. Accordingly, six months after

Rantaine's flight, the astonished people of St. Sampson beheld, issuing from the port, a vessel discharging huge volumes of smoke, and looking like a ship a-fire at sea. This was the first steam vessel to navigate the Channel.

This vessel, to which the people in their dislike and contempt for novelty immediately gave the nickname of 'Lethierry's Galley,' was announced as intended to maintain a constant communication between Guernsey and St. Malo.

IV.

CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF UTOPIA.

IT may be well imagined that the new enterprise did not prosper much at first. The owners of cutters passing between the island of Guernsey and the French coast were loud in their outeries. They denounced this attack upon the Holy Scriptures and their monopoly. The chapels began to fulminate against it. One reverend gentleman, named Elihu, stigmatized the new steam-vessel as an 'atheistical construction,' and the sailing boat was

declared the only orthodox craft. The people saw the horns of the devil among the beasts which the fireship carried to and fro. This storm of protest continued a considerable time. At last, however, it began to be perceived that their animals arrived less tired and sold better, their meat being superior; that the sea risk was less also for passengers; that this mode of travelling was less expensive, shorter, and more sure; that they started at a fixed time, and arrived at a fixed time; that consignments of fish travelling faster arrived fresher, and that it was now possible to find a sale in the French markets for the surplus of great takes of fish so common in Guernsey. The butter, too, from the far-famed Guernsey cows, made the passage quicker in the 'Devil Boat' than in the old sailing vessels, and lost nothing of its good quality, insomuch that Dinan, in Brittany, began to become a customer for it, as well as St. Brieuc and Rennes. In short, thanks to what they called 'Lethierry's Galley,' the people enjoyed safe travelling, regular communication,

prompt and easy passages to and fro, an increase of circulation, an extension of markets and of commerce, and, finally, it was felt that it was necessary to patronize this 'Devil Boat,' which flew in the face of the Holy Scriptures, and brought wealth to the island. Some daring spirits even went so far as to express a positive satisfaction at it. ·Sieur Landoys, the registrar, bestowed his approval upon the vessel—an undoubted piece of impartiality on his part, as he did not like Lethierry. For, first of all, Lethierry was entitled to the dignity of 'Mess,' while Landoys was merely 'Sieur Landoys.' Then, although registrar of St. Peter's Port, Landoys was a parishoner of St. Sampson. Now, there was not in the entire parish another man besides them devoid of prejudices. It seemed little enough, therefore, to indulge themselves with a detestation of each other. Two of a trade, says the proverb, rarely agree.

Sieur Landoys, however, had the honesty to support the steamboat. Others followed

Landoys. By little and little, these facts multiplied. The growth of opinion is like the rising tide. Time and the continued and increasing success of the venture, with the evidence of real service rendered and the improvement in the general welfare, gradually converted the people; and the day at length arrived when, with the exception of a few wise-acres, every one admired 'Lethierry's Galley.'

It would probably win less admiration now-a-days. This steamboat of forty years since would doubtless provoke a smile among our modern boat-builders; for this marvel was ill-shaped; this prodigy was clumsy and infirm.

The distance between our grand Atlantic steam-vessels of the present day and the boats with wheel-paddles which Denis Papin floated on the Fulda in 1707, is not greater than that between a three-decker, like the Montebello, 200 feet long, having a main yard of 115 feet carrying a weight of 3,000 tons, 1,100 men, 120 guns, 10,000 cannon-balls, and 160 packages of canister, belching forth at every broad

sidé, when in action, 3,300 pounds of iron, and spreading to the wind, when it moves, 5,600 square mètres of canvas, and the old Danish galley of the second century, discovered, full of stone hatchets, and bows and clubs, in the mud of the seashore, at Wester-Satrup, and preserved at the Hôtel de Ville at Flensburg.

Exactly one hundred years—from 1707 to 1807—separate the first paddle-boat of Papin from the first steamboat of Fulton. Lethierry's galley was assuredly a great improvement upon those two rough sketches; but it was itself only a sketch. For all that, it was a masterpiece in its way. Every scientific discovery in embryo presents that double aspect—a monster in the foetus, a marvel in the germ.

V.

THE DEVIL BOAT.

‘**L**ETHIERRY’S GALLEY’ was not masted with a view to sailing well ; a fact which was not a defect ; it is, indeed, one of the laws of naval construction. Besides, her motive power being steam, her sails were only accessory. A paddle steamboat, moreover, is almost insensible to sails. The new steam-vessel was too short, round, and thickset. ’ She had too much bow, and too great a breadth of quarter. The daring of inventors had not yet reached the point of making a steam-vessel light : Le-

thierry's boat had some of the defects of Gilliatt's Dutch sloop. She pitched very little, but she rolled a good deal. Her paddle-boxes were too high. She had too much beam for her length. The massive machinery encumbered her, and to make her capable of carrying a heavy cargo, her constructors had raised her bulwarks to an unusual height, giving to the vessel the defects of old seventy-fours, a bastard model which would have to be cut down to render them really seaworthy, or fit to go into action. Being short, she ought to have been able to veer quickly—the time employed in a manœuvre of that kind being in proportion to the length of the vessel—but her weight deprived her of the advantage of her shortness. Her midship-frame was too broad, a fact which retarded her; the resistance of the sea being proportioned to the largest section below the water-line, and to the square of the speed. Her prow was vertical, which would not be regarded as a fault at the present day, but at that period this portion of the construc-

tion was invariably sloped at an angle of forty-five degrees. All the curving lines of the hull agreed well together. The rudder was the old-fashioned bar-rudder, not the wheeled one of the present time. Two skiffs, a species of *you-yous*, were suspended to the davits. The vessel had four anchors; the sheet anchor, the second or working anchor, and two bower anchors. These four anchors, slung by chains, were moved, according to the occasion, by the great capstan of the poop, or by the small capstan at the prow. At that period the pump windlass had not superseded the intermitting efforts of the old handspike. Having only two bower anchors, one on the starboard and the other on the larboard side, the vessel could not move conveniently in certain winds, though she could aid herself at such times with the second anchor. Her speed was six knots an hour. When lying-to she rode well. Take her as she was, 'Lethierry's Galley' was a good sea-boat; but people felt, that in moments of danger from reefs or water-spouts, she would

be hardly manageable. Unhappily her build made her roll about on the waves, with a perpetual creaking like that of a new shoe.

She was, above all, a merchandize boat, and, like all ships built more for commerce than for fighting, was constructed exclusively with a view to stowage. She carried few passengers. The transport of cattle rendered stowage difficult and very peculiar. Vessels carried bullocks at that time in the hold, which was a complication of the difficulty. At the present day they are stowed on the fore-deck. The paddle-boxes of Lethierry's 'Devil Boat' were painted white, the hull, down to the water-line, red, and all the rest of the vessel black, according to the somewhat ugly fashion of this century. When empty she drew seven feet of water, and when laden fourteen.

With regard to the engine, it was of considerable power. To speak exactly, its power was equal to that of one horse to every three tons burden, which is almost equal to that of a tug-boat. The paddles were well placed, a little

in advance of the centre of gravity of the vessel. The maximum pressure of the engine was equal to two atmospheres. It consumed a great deal of coal, although it was constructed on the condensation and expansion principles. For that period the engine seemed, and indeed was, admirable. It had been constructed in France, at the works at Bercy. Mess Lethierry had roughly sketched it: the engineer who had constructed it in accordance with his diagram was dead, so that the engine was unique, and probably could not have been replaced. The designer still lived, but the constructor was no more.

The engine had cost forty thousand francs.

Lethierry had himself constructed the 'Devil Boat' upon the great covered stocks by the side of the first tower between St. Peter's Port and St. Sampson. He went to Brême to buy the wood. All his skill as a shipwright was exhausted in its construction; his ingenuity might be seen in the planks, the seams of which were straight and even, and covered

with sarangousti, an Indian mastic, better than resin. The sheathing was well beaten. To remedy the roundness of the hull, Lethierry had fitted out a boom at the bowsprit, which allowed him to add a false spritsail to the regular one. On the day of the launch, he cried aloud, 'At last I am afloat!' The vessel was successful, in fact, as the reader has already learnt.

Either by chance or design she had been launched on the 14th of July, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille. On that day, mounted upon the bridge between the two paddle-boxes, looked Lethierry upon the sea, and exclaimed, 'It is your turn now! The Parisians took the Bastille, now science takes the sea.'

Lethierry's boat made the voyage from Guernsey to St. Malo once a week. She started on the Tuesday morning, and returned on the Friday evening, in time for the Saturday market. She was a stronger craft than any of the largest coasting sloops in all the archipelago, and her capacity being in pro-

portion to her dimensions, one of her voyages was equal to four voyages of an ordinary boat in the same trade; hence they were very profitable. The reputation of a vessel depends on its stowage, and Lethierry was an admirable stower of cargo. When he was no longer able to work himself, he trained up a sailor to undertake this duty. At the end of two years, the steamboat brought in a clear seven hundred and fifty pounds sterling a-year, or eighteen thousand francs. The pound sterling of Guernsey is worth twenty-four francs only; that of England twenty-five, and that of Jersey twenty-six. These differences are less unimportant than they seem: the banks, at all events, know how to turn them to advantage.

VI.

LETHIERRY'S EXALTATION.

THE 'Devil Boat' prospered. Mess Lethierry began to look forward to the time when he should be called 'Monsieur.' At Guernsey, people do not become 'monsieurs' at one bound. Between the plain man and the gentleman, there is quite a scale to climb. To begin with, we have the simple name, plain 'Peter,' let us suppose; the second step is 'Neighbour Peter;' the third, 'Father Peter;' the fourth, 'Sieur Peter;' the fifth, 'Mess

Peter;’ and then we reach the summit in ‘Monsieur Peter.’

This scale ascending, thus from the ground is carried to still greater heights. All the upper classes of England join on and continue it. Here are the various steps, becoming more and more glorious. Above the Monsieur, or ‘Mr.,’ there is the ‘Esquire;’ above the esquire, the knight; above the knight, still rising, we have the baronet, the Scotch laird, the baron, the viscount, the earl (called count in France, and jarl in Norway); the marquis, the duke, the prince of the blood royal, and the king: so by degrees we ascend from the people to the middle class, from the middle class to the baronetage, from the baronetage to the peerage, from the peerage to royalty.

Thanks to his successful ingenuity, thanks to steam, and his engines, and the ‘Devil Boat,’ Mess Lethierry was fast becoming an important personage. When building his vessel he had been compelled to borrow money. He had become indebted at Brême, he had be-

come indebted at St. Malo; but every year he diminished his obligations.

He had moreover purchased on credit at the very entrance to the port of St. Sampson a pretty stone-built house, entirely new, situate between the sea and a garden. On the corner of this house was inscribed the name of 'the Bravées.' Its front formed a part of the wall of the port itself, and it was remarkable for a double row of windows: on the north, alongside a little enclosure filled with flowers, and on the south commanding a view of the ocean. It had thus two *façades*, one open to the tempest and the sea, the other looking into a garden filled with roses.

These two frontages seemed made for the two inmates of the house—Mess Lethierry and Déruchette.

The 'Bravées' was popular at St. Sampson, for Mess Lethierry had at length become a popular man. This popularity was due partly to his good nature, his devotedness, and his courage; partly to the number of lives he

had saved ; and a great deal to his success, and to the fact that he had awarded to St. Sampson the honour of being the port of the departure and arrival of the new steamboat. Having made the discovery that the ‘ Devil Boat ’ was decidedly a success, St. Peter’s, the capital, desired to obtain it for that port, but Lethierry held fast to St. Sampson. It was his native town. ‘ It was there that I was first pitched into the water,’ he used to say ; hence his great local popularity. His position as a small landed proprietor paying land-tax, made him, what they call in Guernsey, an *unhabitant*. He was chosen douzenier. The poor sailor had mounted five out of six steps of the Guernsey social scale ; he had attained the dignity of ‘ Mess ;’ he was rapidly approaching the Monsieur ; and who could predict whether he might not even rise higher than that ; who could say that they might not one day find in the almanack of Guernsey, under the heading of ‘ Nobility and Gentry,’ the astonishing and superb inscription, — *Lethierry, Esq.*

But Mess Lethierry had nothing of vanity in his nature, or he had no sense of it; or if he had, disdained it. To know that he was useful was his greatest pleasure; to be popular touched him less than being necessary; he had, as we have already said, only two objects of delight, and consequently only two ambitions: the *Durande* and *Déruchette*.

However this may have been, he had embarked in the lottery of the sea, and had gained the chief prize.

This chief prize was the *Durande* steaming away in all her pride.

VII.

THE SAME GODFATHER AND THE SAME
PATRON SAINT.

HAVING created his steamboat, Lethierry had christened it; he had called it Durande—‘La Durande.’ We will speak of her henceforth by no other name; we will claim the liberty also, in spite of typographical usage, of not italicizing this name Durande; conforming in this to the notion of Mess Lethierry, in whose eyes La Durande was almost a living person.

Durande and Déruchette are the same name. Déruchette is the diminutive.

This diminutive is very common in France.

In the country the names of saints are endowed with all these diminutives as well as all their augmentatives. One might suppose there were several persons when there is, in fact, only one. This system of patrons and patronesses under different names is by no means rare. Lise, Lisette, Lisa, Elisa, Isabelle, Lisbeth, Betsy, all these are simply Elizabeth. It is probable that Mahout, Maclou, Malo, and Magloire are the same saint : this, however, we do not vouch for.

Saint Durande is a saint of l'Angoumois, and of the Charente ; whether she is an orthodox member of the calendar is a question for the Bollandists : orthodox or not, she has been made the patron saint of numerous chapels.

It was while Lethierry was a young sailor at Rochefort that he had made the acquaintance of this saint, probably in the person of some pretty Charantaise, perhaps in that of the grisette with the white nails. The saint had remained sufficiently in his memory for him to

give the name to the two things which he loved most—Durande to the steamboat, Déruchette to the girl.

Of one he was the father, of the other the uncle.

Déruchette was the daughter of a brother who had died: she was an orphan child: he had adopted her, and had taken the place both of father and mother.

Déruchette was not only his niece, she was his godchild; he had held her in his arms at the baptismal font; it was he who had chosen her patron saint, Durande, and her Christian name, Déruchette.

Déruchette, as we have said, was born at St. Peter's Port. Her name was inscribed at its date on the register of the parish.

As long as the niece was a child, and the uncle poor, nobody took heed of her appellation of Déruchette, but when the little girl became a miss, and the sailor a gentleman, the name of Déruchette shocked the feelings of Guernsey society; the uncouthness of the sound aston-

ished every one. Folks asked Mess Lethierry ‘why Déruchette?’ he answered, ‘It is a very good name in its way.’ Several attempts were made to get him to obtain a change in the baptismal name, but he would be no party to them. One day a fine lady of the upper circle of society in St. Sampson, the wife of a rich retired ironfounder, said to Mess Lethierry, ‘In future, I shall call your daughter Nancy.’

‘If names of country towns are in fashion,’ said he, ‘why not Lons le Saulnier?’ The fine lady did not yield her point, and on the morrow said, ‘We are determined not to have it Déruchette, I have found for your daughter a pretty name—*Marianne*.’ ‘A very pretty name, indeed,’ replied Mess Lethierry, ‘composed of two words, which signify a husband and an ass.’* He held fast to Déruchette

It would be a mistake to infer from Lethierry’s pun that he had no wish to see his niece married. He desired to see her married, certainly : but in his own way : he intended her to have a

* A play upon the French words, *mari* and *âne*.

husband after his own heart—one who would work hard, and whose wife would have little to do. He liked rough hands in a man, and delicate ones in a woman. To prevent Déruchette spoiling her pretty hands he had always brought her up like a young lady; he had provided her with a music-master, a piano, a little library, and a few needles and threads in a pretty work-basket: she was, indeed, more often reading than stitching, more often playing than reading; this was as Mess Lethierry wished it; to be charming was all that he expected of her: he had reared the young girl like a flower. Whoever has studied the character of sailors will understand this—rude and hard in their nature, they have an odd partiality for grace and delicacy. To realize the idea of the uncle, the niece ought to have been rich; so indeed felt Mess Lethierry. His steamboat voyaged for this end. The mission of Durande was to provide a marriage portion for Déruchette.

VIII.

BONNIE DUNDEE.

DÉRUCHETTE occupied the prettiest room at the Bravées ; it had two windows, was furnished with various articles made of fine-grained mahogany, had a bed with four curtains, green and white, and looked out upon the garden, and beyond it towards the high hill on which stands Vale Castle. Gilliatt's house, the Bû de la Rue, was on the other side of this hill.

Déruchette had her music and piano in this

chamber; she accompanied herself on the instrument when singing the melody which she preferred—the melancholy Scottish air of ‘Bonnie Dundee.’ The very spirit of night breathes in this melody—but her voice was full of the freshness of dawn. The contrast was quaint and pleasing; people said, ‘Miss Déruchette is at her piano.’

The passers-by at the foot of the hill stopped sometimes before the wall of the garden of the Bravées to listen to that sweet voice and plaintive song.

Déruchette was the very embodiment of joy as she went to-and-fro in the house: she brought with her a perpetual Spring. She was beautiful, but more pretty than beautiful; and still more graceful than pretty. She reminded the good old pilots, friends of Mess Lethierry, of that princess in the song which the soldiers and sailors sing, who was so beautiful—

‘Qu’elle passait pour telle dans le régiment.’

Mess Lethierry used to say, ‘She has a head of hair like a ship’s cable.’

From her infancy she had been remarkable for beauty. The learned in such matters had grave doubts about her nose, but the little one having probably determined to be pretty, had finally satisfied their requirements. She grew to girlhood without any serious loss of beauty; her nose became neither too long nor too short; and when grown up, her critics admitted her to be charming.

She never addressed her uncle otherwise than as father.

Lethierry allowed her to soil her fingers a little in gardening, and even in some kind of household duties : she watered her beds of pink hollyhocks, purple foxgloves, perennial phloxes, and scarlet herb bennets. She took good advantage of the climate of Guernsey, so favourable to flowers. She had, like many other persons there, aloe in the open ground, and, what is more difficult, she succeeded in cultivating the Nepaulese cinquefoil. Her little kitchen garden was scientifically arranged ; she was able to produce from it several kinds of rare vegetables. She sowed

Dutch cauliflower and Brussels cabbages, which she thinned out in July, turnips for August, endive for September, short parsnip for the autumn, and rampions for winter. Mess Lethierry did not interfere with her in this, so long as she did not handle the spade and rake too much, or meddle with the coarser kinds of garden labour. He had provided her with two servants, one named Grace, and the other Douce, which are favourite names in Guernsey. Grace and Douce did the hard work of the house and garden, and they had the right to have red hands.

With regard to Mess Lethierry, his room was a little retreat with a view over the harbour, and communicating with the great lower room of the ground floor, on which was situated the door of the house, near which the various staircases met.

His room was furnished with his hammock, his chronometer, and his pipe: there were also a table and a chair. The ceiling had been whitewashed, as well as the four walls. A fine marine map, bearing the inscription

W. Fladen, 5, Charing Cross, Geographer to His Majesty, and representing the Channel Islands, was nailed up at the side of the door, and on the left, stretched out and fastened with other nails, appeared one of those large cotton handkerchiefs on which are printed, in colours, the signals of all countries in the world, having at the four corners the standards of France, Russia, Spain, and the United States, and in the centre the union jack of England.

Douce and Grace were two faithful creatures within certain limits. Douce was good-natured enough, and Grace was probably good-looking. Douce was unmarried, and had secretly 'a gallant.' In the Channel Islands the word is common, as indeed is the fact itself. The two girls regarded as servants had something of the Creole in their character, a sort of slowness in their movements, not out of keeping with the Norman spirit pervading the relations of servant and master in the Channel Islands. Grace, coquettish and good-looking, was always scanning the future with a nervous anxiety. This

arose from the fact of her not only having, like Douce, 'a gallant,' but also, as the scandal-loving averred, a sailor husband, whose return one day was a thing she dreaded. This, however, does not concern us. In a household less austere and less innocent, Douce would have continued to be the servant, but Grace would have become the *soubrette*. The dangerous talents of Grace were lost upon a young mistress so pure and good as Déruchette. For the rest, the intrigues of Douce and Grace were cautiously concealed. Mess Lethierry knew nothing of such matters, and no token of them had ever reached Déruchette.

The lower room of the ground floor, a hall with a large fireplace and surrounded with benches and tables, had served in the last century as a meeting-place for a conventicle of French Protestant refugees. The sole ornament of the bare stone wall was a sheet of parchment, set in a frame of black wood, on which were represented some of the charitable deeds of the great Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux. Some poor

diocessans of this famous orator, surnamed the 'Eagle,' persecuted by him at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and driven to take shelter at Guernsey, had hung this picture on the wall to preserve the remembrance of those facts. The spectator who had the patience to decipher a rude handwriting in faded ink might have learnt the following facts, which are but little known:—'29th October, 1685, Monsieur the Bishop of Meaux, appeals to the king to destroy the temples of Morcef and Nanteuil.'—'2nd April, 1686, Arrest of Cochard, father and son, for their religious opinions, at the request of Monsieur the Bishop of Meaux. Released: the Cochards having recanted.'—'28th October, 1699, Monsieur the Bishop of Meaux sent to Mde. Pontchartrain a petition of remonstrance, pointing out that it will be necessary to place the young ladies named Chalandes and de Neuville, who are of the reformed religion, in the House of the "New Catholics" at Paris.'—'7th July, 1703, the king's order executed as requested by Monsieur the

Bishop of Meaux, for shutting up in an asylum Baudouin and his wife, two bad Catholics of Fublaines.'

At the end of the hall, near the door of Mess Lethierry's room, was a little corner with a wooden partition, which had been the Huguenots' sanctum, and had become, thanks to its row of rails and a small hole to pass paper or money through, the steamboat office; that is to say, the office of the Durande, kept by Mess Lethierry in person. Upon the old oaken reading-desk, where once rested the Holy Bible, lay a great ledger with its alternate pages headed Dr. and Cr.

IX.

THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED RANTAINÉ'S
CHARACTER.

AS long as Mess Lethierry had been able to do duty, he had commanded the *Durande*, and had had no other pilot or captain but himself; but a time had come, as we have said, when he had been compelled to find a successor. He had chosen for that purpose *Sieur Clubin*, of *Torteval*, a taciturn man. *Sieur Clubin* had a character upon the coast for strict probity. He became the *alter ego*, the double of Mess Lethierry.

Sieur Clubin, although he had rather the look

of a notary than of a sailor, was a mariner of rare skill. He had all the talents which are required to meet dangers of every kind. He was a skilful stower, a safe man aloft, an able and careful boatswain, a powerful steersman, an experienced pilot, and a bold captain. He was prudent, and he carried his prudence sometimes to the point of daring, which is a great quality at sea. His natural apprehensiveness of danger was tempered by a strong instinct of what was possible in an emergency. He was one of those mariners who will face risks to a point perfectly well known to themselves, and who generally manage to come successfully out of every peril. Every certainty which a man can command, dealing with so fickle an element as the sea, he possessed. *Sieur Clubin*, moreover, was a renowned swimmer; he was one of that race of men broken in to the buffeting of the waves, who can remain as long as they please in the water—who can start from the *Havre-des-Pas* at Jersey, double the *Colettes*, swim round the *Hermitage* and *Castle Elizabeth*, and return in

two hours to the point from which they started. He came from Torteval, where he had the reputation of often having swum across the passage so much dreaded, from the Hanways rocks to the point of Pleinmont.

One circumstance which had recommended Sieur Clubin to Mess Lethierry more than any other, was his having judged correctly the character of Rantaine. He had pointed out to Lethierry the dishonesty of the man, and had said ‘Rantaine will rob you.’ His prediction was verified. More than once—in matters, it is true, not very important—Mess Lethierry had put his ever scrupulous honesty to the proof; and he freely communicated with him on the subject of his affairs. Mess Lethierry used to say, ‘A good conscience expects to be treated with perfect confidence.’

X.

LONG YARNS.

MESS LETHIERRY, for the sake of his own case, always wore his sea-faring clothes, and preferred his tarpauling overcoat to his pilot jacket. Déruchette felt vexed occasionally about this peculiarity. Nothing is prettier than a pouting beauty. She laughed and scolded. ‘My dear father,’ she would say, ‘what a smell of pitch!’ and she would give him a gentle tap upon his broad shoulders.

This good old seaman had gathered from

his voyages many wonderful stories. He had seen at Madagascar birds' feathers, three of which sufficed to make a roof of a house. He had seen in India, field sorrel, the stalks of which were nine inches high. In New Holland he had seen troops of turkeys and geese led about and guarded by a bird, like a flock by a shepherd's dog; this bird was called the Agami. He had visited elephants' cemeteries. In Africa, he had encountered gorillas, a terrible species of man-monkey. He knew the ways of all the ape tribe, from the wild dog-faced monkey, which he called the Macaco-bravo, to the howling monkey or *Macaco-barbado*. In Chili, he had seen a pouched-monkey move the compassion of the huntsman by showing its little one. He had seen in California a hollow trunk of a tree fall to the ground, so vast that a man on horseback could ride one hundred paces inside. In Morocco, he had seen the Mozabites and the Bisskris fighting with mat-raks and bars of iron—the Bisskris, because they had been called *kelbs*, which means dogs;

and the Mozabites, because they had been treated as *khamsi*, which means people of the fifth sect. He had seen in China the pirate Chanh-thong-quan-larh-Quoi cut to pieces for having assassinated the Ap of a village. At Thu-dan-mot, he had seen a lion carry off an old woman in the open market-place. He was present at the arrival of the Great Serpent brought from Canton to Saigon to celebrate in the pagoda of Cho-len the fête of Quan-nam, the goddess of navigators. He had beheld the great Quan-Sû among the Moi. At Rio de Janeiro, he had seen the Brazilian ladies in the evening put little balls of gauze into their hair, each containing a beautiful kind of firefly; and the whole forming a head-dress of little twinkling lights. He had combated in Paraguay with swarms of enormous ants and spiders, big and downy as an infant's head, and compassing with their long legs a third of a yard, and attacking men by pricking them with their bristles, which enter the skin as sharp as arrows, and raise painful blisters. On the river Arinos,

a tributary of the Tocantins, in the virgin forests to the north of Diamantina, he had determined the existence of the famous bat-shaped people, the Murcilagos, or men who are born with white hair and red eyes, who live in the shady solitudes of the woods, sleep by day, awake by night, and fish and hunt in the dark, seeing better then than by the light of the moon. He told how, near Beyrout, once in an encampment of an expedition of which he formed part, a rain gauge belonging to one of the party happened to be stolen from a tent. A wizard, wearing two or three strips of leather only, and looking like a man having nothing on but his braces, thereupon rang a bell at the end of a horn so violently, that a hyena finally answered the summons by bringing back the missing instrument. The hyena was, in fact, the thief. These veritable histories bore a strong resemblance to fictions; but they amused Déruchette.

The *poupée* or 'doll' of the Durande, as the people of the Channel Islands call the figure-

head of a ship, was the connecting link between the vessel and Lethierry's niece.

The *poupée* of the Durande was particularly dear to Mess Lethierry. He had instructed the carver to make it resemble Déruchette. It looked like a rude attempt to cut out a face with a hatchet; or like a clumsy log trying hard to look like a girl.

This unshapely block produced a great effect upon Mess Lethierry's imagination. He looked upon it with an almost superstitious admiration. His faith in it was complete. He was able to trace in it an excellent resemblance to Déruchette. Thus the dogma resembles the truth, and the idol the deity.

Mess Lethierry had two grand fête days in every week; one was Tuesday, the other Friday. His first delight consisted in seeing the Durande weigh anchor; his second in seeing her enter the port again. He leaned upon his elbows at the window contemplating his work, and was happy.

On Fridays, the presence of Mess Lethierry

at his window was a signal. When people passing the Bravées saw him lighting his pipe, they said, 'Ay! the steamboat is in sight.' One kind of smoke was the herald of the other.

The Durande, when she entered the port, made her cable fast to a huge iron ring under Mess Lethierry's window, and fixed in the basement of the house. On those nights, Lethierry slept soundly in his hammock, with a soothing consciousness of the presence of Déruchette asleep in her room near him, and of the Durande moored opposite.

The moorings of the Durande were close to the great bell of the port. A little strip of quay passed thence before the door of the Bravées.

The quay, the Bravées, and its house, the garden, the alleys bordered with edges, and the greater part even of the surrounding houses, no longer exist. The demand for Guernsey granite has invaded these too. The whole of this part of the town is now occupied by stone-cutters' yards.

XI.

MATRIMONIAL PROSPECTS.

DÉRUCHETTE was approaching womanhood, and was still unmarried.

Mess Lethierry in bringing her up to have white hands had also rendered her somewhat fastidious. A training of that kind has its disadvantages; but Lethierry was himself still more fastidious. He would have liked to have provided at the same time for both his idols; to have found in the guide and companion of the one a commander for the other. What is a

husband but the pilot on the voyage of matrimony. Why not then the same conductor for the vessel and for the girl? The affairs of a household have their tides, their ebbs and flows, and he who knows how to steer a bark, ought to know how to guide a woman's destiny, subject as both are to the influences of the moon and the wind. Sieur Clubin being only fifteen years younger than Lethierry, would necessarily be only a provisional master for the *Durande*. It would be necessary to find a young captain, a permanent master, a true successor of the founder, inventor, and creator of the first Channel steamboat. A captain for the *Durande* who should come up to his ideal would have been already almost a son-in-law in Lethierry's eyes. Why not make him a son-in-law in a double sense? The idea pleased him. The husband *in posse* of *Déruchette* haunted his dreams. His ideal was a powerful seaman, tanned and browned by weather, a sea Athlete. This, however, was not exactly the ideal of

Déruchette. Her dreams, if dreams they could even be called, were of a more ethereal character.

The uncle and the niece were at all events agreed in not being in haste to seek a solution of these problems. When Déruchette began to be regarded as a probable heiress, a crowd of suitors had presented themselves. Attentions under these circumstances are not generally worth much. Mess Lethierry felt this. He would grumble out the old French proverb, '*A maiden of gold, a suitor of brass.*' He politely showed the fortune-seekers to the door. He was content to wait, and so was Déruchette.

It was, perhaps, a singular fact, that he had little inclination for the local aristocracy. In that respect Mess Lethierry showed himself not entirely English. It will hardly be believed that he even refused for Déruchette a Ganduel of Jersey, and a Bugnet-Nicolin of Sark. People were bold enough to affirm, although we

doubt if this were possible, that he had even declined the proposals of a member of the family of Edou, which is evidently descended from 'Edou-ard' (Anglicè Edward) the Confessor.

XII.

AN ANOMALY IN THE CHARACTER OF
LETHIERRY.

MESS LETHIERRY had a failing, and a serious one. He detested a priest; though not as an individual, but as an institution. Reading one day—for he used to read—in a work of Voltaire—for he would even read Voltaire—the remark that priests ‘have something cat-like in their nature,’ he laid down the book and was heard to mutter, ‘Then I suppose I have something dog-like in mine.’

It must be remembered that the priests—

Lutheran and Calvinist, as well as Catholic—had vigorously combated the new ‘Devil Boat,’ and had persecuted its inventor. To be a sort of revolutionist in the art of navigation, to introduce a spirit of progress in the Norman archipelago, to disturb the peace of the poor little island of Guernsey with a new invention was in their eyes, as we have not concealed from the reader, an abominable and most condemnable rashness. Nor had they omitted to condemn it pretty loudly. It must not be forgotten that we are now speaking of the Guernsey clergy of a bygone generation, very different from that of the present time, who in almost all the local places of worship display a laudable sympathy with progress. They had embarrassed Lethierry in a hundred ways; every sort of resisting force which can be found in sermons and discourses had been employed against him. Detested by the churchmen, he naturally came to detest them in his turn. Their hatred was the extenuating circumstance to be taken into account in judging of his.

But it must be confessed that his dislike for priests was, in some degree, in his very nature. It was hardly necessary for them to hate him in order to inspire him with aversion. As he said, he moved among them like the dog among cats. He had an antipathy to them, not only in idea, but in what is more difficult to analyse, his instincts. He felt their secret claws, and showed his teeth; sometimes, it must be confessed, a little at random and out of season. It is a mistake to make no distinctions: a dislike in the mass is a prejudice. The good Savoyard curé would have found no favour in his eyes. It is not certain that a worthy priest was even a possible thing in Lethierry's mind. His philosophy was carried so far, that his good sense sometimes abandoned him. There is such a thing as the intolerance of tolerants, as well as the violence of moderates. But Lethierry was at bottom too good-natured to be a thorough hater. He did not attack so much as avoid. He kept the church people at a distance. He suffered evil at their hands; but he confined

himself to not wishing them any good. The shade of difference, in fact, between his aversion and theirs, lay in the fact that they bore animosity, while he had only a strong antipathy. Small as is the island of Guernsey, it has, unfortunately, plenty of room for differences of religion; there, to take the broad distinction, is the Catholic faith and the Protestant faith: every form of worship has its temple or chapel. In Germany, at Heidelberg, for example, people are not so particular; they divide a church in two, one half for Saint Peter, the other half for Calvin, and between the two is a partition to prevent religious variances terminating in fisticuffs. The shares are equal; the Catholics have three altars, the Huguenots three altars. As the services are at the same hours, one bell summons both denominations to prayers; it rings, in fact, both for God and for Satan, according as each pleases to regard it. Nothing can be more simple.

The phlegmatic character of the Germans favours, I suppose, this peculiar arrangement,

but in Guernsey every religion has its own domicile; *there is the orthodox parish and the heretic parish*; the individual may choose. 'Neither one nor the other' was the choice of Mess Lethierry.

This sailor, workman, philosopher, and parvenu trader, though a simple man in appearance, was by no means simple at bottom. He had his opinions and his prejudices. On the subject of the priests he was immovable; he would have entered the lists with Montlosier.

Occasionally he indulged in rather disrespectful jokes upon this subject. He had certain odd expressions thereupon peculiar to himself, but significant enough. Going to confession he called 'combing one's conscience.' The little learning that he had—a certain amount of reading picked up here and there between the squalls at sea—did not prevent his making blunders in spelling. He made also mistakes in pronunciation, some of which, however, gave a double sense to his words, which might have been suspected of a sly intention.

Though he was a strong anti-papist, that *circumstance was far from conciliating the Anglicans.* He was no more liked by the Protestant rectors than by the Catholic curés. The enunciation of the gravest dogmas did not prevent his anti-theological temper bursting forth. Accident, for example, having once brought him to hear a sermon, on eternal punishment, by the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode—a magnificent discourse, filled from one end to the other with sacred texts, proving the everlasting pains, the tortures, the torments, the perditions, the inexorable chastisements, the burnings without end, the inextinguishable maledictions, the wrath of the Almighty, the celestial fury, the divine vengeance; and other incontestable realities—he was heard to say as he was going out in the midst of the faithful flock, ‘You see, I have an odd notion of my own on this matter; I imagine God as a merciful being.’

This leaven of atheism was doubtless due to his sojourn in France.

Although a Guernsey man of pure extraction, he was called in the island 'the Frenchman;' but chiefly on account of his 'improper' manner of speaking. He did not indeed conceal the truth from himself. He was impregnated with ideas subversive of established institutions. His obstinacy in constructing the 'Devil Boat' had proved that. He used to say, 'I have a little of '89 in my head.' A doubtful sort of avowal. These were not his only indiscretions. In France 'to preserve appearances,' in England 'to be respectable,' is the chief condition of a quiet life. To be respectable implies a multitude of little observances, from the strict keeping of Sunday down to the careful tying of a cravat. 'To act so that nobody may point at you;' this is the terrible social law. To be pointed at with the finger is almost the same thing as an anathematization. Little towns, always hotbeds of gossip, are remarkable for that isolating malignancy, which is like the tremendous malediction of the Church seen through the wrong end of the telescope. The bravest are afraid of

this ordeal. They are ready to confront the storm, the fire of cannon, but they shrink at the glance of 'Mrs. Grundy.' Mess Lethierry was more obstinate than logical; but under pressure even his obstinacy would bend. He put—to use another of his phrases, eminently suggestive of latent compromises, not always pleasant to avow—'a little water in his wine.' He kept aloof from the clergy, but he did not absolutely close his door against them. On official occasions, and at the customary epochs of pastoral visits, he received with sufficiently good grace both the Lutheran rector and the Papist chaplain. He had even, though at distant intervals, accompanied Déruchette to the Anglican parish church, to which Déruchette herself, as we have said, only went on the four great festivals of the year.

On the whole, these little concessions, which always cost him a pang, irritated him; and far from inclining him towards the church people, only increased his inward disinclination to them. He compensated himself by more

raillery. His nature, in general so devoid of bitterness, had no uncharitable side except this. To alter him, however, was impossible.

In fact, this was in his very temperament, and was beyond his own power to control.

Every sort of priest or clergyman was distasteful to him. He had a little of the old revolutionary want of reverence. He did not distinguish between one form of worship and another. He did not do justice to that great step in the progress of ideas, the denial of the real presence. His shortsightedness in these matters even prevented his perceiving any essential difference between a minister and an abbé. A reverend doctor and a reverend father were pretty nearly the same to him. He used to say, 'Wesley is not more to my taste than Loyola.' When he saw a reverend pastor walking with his wife, he would turn to look at them, and mutter 'a married priest,' in a tone which brought out all the absurdity which those words had in the ears of Frenchmen at that time. He used to

relate how on his last voyage to England he had seen the ‘Bishopess’ of London. His dislike for marriages of that sort amounted almost to disgust. ‘Gown and gown do not mate well,’ he would say. The sacerdotal function was to him in the nature of a distinct sex. It would have been natural to him to have said, ‘Neither a man nor a woman, only a priest;’ and he had the bad taste to apply to the Anglican and the Roman-catholic clergy the same disdainful epithets. He confounded the two cassocks in the same phraseology. He did not take the trouble to vary in favour of Catholics or Lutherans, or whatever they might be, the figures of speech common among military men of that period. He would say to Déruchette, ‘Marry whom you please, provided you do not marry a parson.’

XIII.

THOUGHTLESSNESS ADDS A GRACE TO BEAUTY.

A WORD once said, Mess Lethierry remembered it: a word once said, Déruchette soon forgot it. Here was another difference between the uncle and the niece.

Brought up in the peculiar way already described, Déruchette was little accustomed to responsibility. There is a latent danger in an education not sufficiently serious, which cannot be too much insisted on. It is perhaps unwise to endeavour to make a child happy too soon.

So long as she was happy, Déruchette thought all was well. She knew, too, that it was always a pleasure to her uncle to see her pleased. The religious sentiment in her nature was satisfied with going to the parish church four times in the year. We have seen her in her Christmas-day toilette. Of life, she was entirely ignorant. She had a disposition which one day might lead her to love passionately. Meanwhile she was contented.

She sang by fits and starts, chatted by fits and starts, enjoyed the hour as it passed, fulfilled some little duty, and was gone again, and was delightful in all. Add to all this the English sort of liberty which she enjoyed. In England the very infants go alone; girls are their own mistresses, and adolescence is almost wholly unrestrained. Such are the differences of manners. Later, how many of these free maidens become female slaves? I use the word in its least odious sense; I mean that they are free in the development of their nature, but slaves to duty.

Déruchette awoke every morning with little thought of her actions of the day before. It would have troubled her a good deal to have had to give an account of how she had spent her time the previous week. All this, however, did not prevent her having certain hours of strange disquietude : times when some dark cloud seemed to pass over the brightness of her joy. Those azure depths are subject to such shadows ! But clouds like these soon passed away. She quickly shook off such moods with a cheerful laugh, knowing neither why she had been sad, nor why she had regained her serenity. She was always at play. As a child, she would take delight in teasing the passers-by. She played practical jokes upon the boys. If the fiend himself had passed that way, she would hardly have spared him some ingenious trick. She was pretty and innocent ; and she could abuse the immunity accorded to such qualities. She was ready with a smile as a cat with a stroke of her claws. So much the worse for the victim of her scratches. She

thought no more of them. Yesterday had no existence for her. She lived in the fullness of to-day. Such it is to have too much happiness fall to one's lot ! With Déruchette impressions vanished like the melted snow.

BOOK IV.

THE BAG-PIPE.



I.

STREAKS OF FIRE IN THE HORIZON.

GILLIATT had never spoken to Déruchette ; he knew her from having seen her at a distance, as men know the morning star.

At the period when Déruchette had met Gilliatt on the road leading from St. Peter's Port to Vale, and had surprised him by tracing his name in the snow, she was just sixteen years of age. Only the evening before Mess

Lethierry had said to her ‘Come; no more childish tricks, you are a great girl.’

That word, ‘Gilliatt,’ written by the young maiden, had sunk into an unfathomed depth.

What were women to Gilliatt? He could not have answered that question himself. When he met one he generally inspired her with something of the timidity which he felt himself; he never spoke to a woman except from urgent necessity. He had never played the part of a ‘gallant’ to any one of the country girls. When he found himself alone on the road, and perceived a woman coming towards him, he would climb over a fence or bury himself in some copse: he even avoided old women. Once in his life he had seen a Parisian lady. A *Parisienne* on the wing was a strange event in Guernsey at that distant epoch; and Gilliatt had heard this gentle lady relate her little troubles in these words:—‘I am very much annoyed; I have got some spots of rain upon my bonnet. Pale buff is a shocking colour for rain.’ Having found, some time afterwards,

between the leaves of a book, an old engraving representing 'a lady of the Chaussée d'Antin' in full dress, he had stuck it against the wall at home as a souvenir of this remarkable apparition.

On that Christmas morning when he had met Déruchette, and when she had written his name and disappeared laughing, he returned home scarcely conscious of why he had gone out. That night he slept little, he was dreaming of a thousand things; that it would be well to cultivate black radishes in the garden, that he had not seen the boat from Sark pass by; had anything happened to it? Then he remembered that he had seen the white stonecrop in flower, a rare thing at that season. He had never known exactly who was the woman who had reared him, and he made up his mind that she must have been his mother, and thought of her with redoubled tenderness. He called to mind the lady's clothing in the old leathern trunk. He thought that the Reverend Jacquemin Hérode would probably one day or other be appointed

Dean of St. Peter's Port and Surrogate of the Bishop, and that the rectory of St. Sampson would become vacant. Next he remembered that the morrow of Christmas would be the twenty-seventh day of the moon, and that consequently high-water would be at twenty-one minutes past three, the half-ebb at a quarter past seven, low-water at thirty-three minutes past nine, and half-flood at thirty-nine minutes past twelve. He recalled, in their most trilling details, the costume of the Highlander who had sold him the bag-pipe: his bonnet with a thistle ornament, his claymore, his close-fitting short jacket, his philabeg ornamented with a pocket and his snuff-horn, his pin set with a Scottish stone, his two girdles, his sash and belts, his sword, cutlass, dirk, and skene-dhu; his black-sheathed knife with its black handle ornamented with two cairngorms, and the bare knees of the soldier; his socks, gaiters, and buckled shoes. This highly-equipped figure became a spectre in his imagination, which pursued him with a sense of feverishness as he sunk into oblivion. When he awoke it was

full daylight, and his first thought was of Déruchette.

The next night he slept more soundly, but he was dreaming again of the Scottish soldier. In the midst of his sleep he remembered that the after-Christmas sittings of the chief Law Court would commence on the 21st of January. He dreamed also about the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode. He thought of Déruchette, and seemed to be in violent anger with her; he wished he had been a child again to throw stones at her windows; then he thought that if he were a child again he should have his mother by his side, and he began to sob.

Gilliatt had a project at this time of going to pass three months at Chousey, or at the Minquiers; but he did not go.

He walked no more along the road to St. Peter's Port.

He had an odd fancy that his name of 'Gilliatt' had remained there traced upon the ground, and that the passers-by stopped to read it.

II.

THE UNKNOWN UNFOLDS ITSELF BY DEGREES.

ON the other hand, Gilliatt had the satisfaction of seeing the Bravées every day. By some accident he was continually passing that way. His business seemed always to lead him by the path which passed under the wall of Déruchette's garden.

One morning, as he was walking along this path, he heard a market-woman who was returning from the Bravées, say to another :
' Miss Lethierry is fond of sea-kale.'

He dug in his garden of the Bû de la Rue a trench for sea-kale. The sea-kale is a vegetable which has a flavour like asparagus.

The wall of the garden of the Bravées was very low ; it would have been easy to scale it. The idea of scaling it would have appeared to him terrible. But there was nothing to hinder his hearing, as any one else might, the voices of persons talking as he passed, in the rooms or in the garden. He did not listen, but he heard them. Once he could distinguish the voices of the two servants, Grace and Douce, disputing. It was a sound which belonged to the house, and their quarrel remained in his ears like a remembrance of music.

On another occasion, he distinguished a voice which was different, and which seemed to him to be the voice of Déruchette. He quickened his pace, and was soon out of hearing.

The words uttered by that voice, however, remained fixed in his memory. He repeated them at every instant. They were, ‘ Will you please give me the little broom ? ’

By degrees he became bolder. He had the daring to stay awhile. One day it happened that Déruchette was singing at her piano, altogether invisible from without, although her window was open. The air was that of 'Bonnie Dundee.' He grew pale, but he screwed his courage to the point of listening.

Springtide came. One day Gilliatt enjoyed a beatific vision. The heavens were opened, and there before his eyes appeared Déruchette, watering lettuces in her little garden.

Soon afterwards he took to doing more than merely listening there. He watched her habits, observed her hours, and waited to catch a glimpse of her.

In all this he was very careful not to be seen.

The year advanced; the time came when the trellises were heavy with roses, and haunted by the butterflies. By little and little, he had come to conceal himself for hours behind her wall, motionless and silent, seen by no one, and

holding his breath as Déruchette passed in and out of her garden. Men grow accustomed to poison by degrees.

From his hiding-place he could often hear the sound of Déruchette conversing with Mess Lethierry under a thick arch of leaves, in a spot where there was a garden-seat. The words came distinctly to his ears.

What a change had come over him ! He had even descended to watch and listen. Alas ! there is something of the character of a spy in every human heart.

There was another garden-seat, visible to him, and nearer. Déruchette would sit there sometimes.

From the flowers that he had observed her gathering he had guessed her taste in the matter of perfumes. The scent of the bindweed was her favourite ; then the pink ; then the honey-suckle ; then the jasmine. The rose stood only fifth in the scale. She looked at the lilies, but did not smell them.

Gilliatt figured her in his imagination from

this choice of odours. With each perfume he associated some perfection.

The very idea of speaking to Déruchette would have made his hair stand on end. A poor old rag-picker, whose wandering brought her from time to time into the little road leading under the enclosure of the Bravées, had occasionally remarked Gilliatt's assiduity beside the wall, and his devotion for this retired spot. Did she connect the presence of a man before this wall with the possibility of a woman behind it? Did she perceive that vague, invisible thread? Was she, in her decrepit mendicancy, still youthful enough to remember something of the old happier days? And could she, in this dark night and winter of her wretched life, still recognize the dawn? We know not: but it appears that, on one occasion, passing near Gilliatt at his post, she brought to bear upon him something as like a smile as she was still capable of, and muttered between her teeth, 'It warms one.'

Gilliatt heard the words, and was struck by

them. 'It warms one,' he murmured, with an inward note of interrogation. 'It warms one.' What did the old woman mean?

He repeated the phrase mechanically all day, but he could not guess its meaning.

III.

THE AIR 'BONNIE DUNDEE' FINDS AN ECHO
ON THE HILL.

IT was in a spot behind the enclosure of the garden of the Bravées, at an angle of the wall, half concealed with holly and ivy, and covered with nettles, wild mallow, and large white mullen growing between the blocks of stone, that he passed the greater part of that summer. He watched there, lost in deep thought. The lizards grew accustomed to his presence, and basked in the sun among the same stones. The summer was bright and full

of dreamy indolence : overhead the light clouds came and went. Gilliatt sat upon the grass. The air was full of the songs of birds. He held his two hands up to his forehead, sometimes trying to recollect himself : Why should she write his name in the snow ? From a distance the sea breeze came up in gentle breaths, at intervals the horn of the quarrymen sounded abruptly, warning the passers-by to take shelter, as they shattered some mass with gunpowder. The Port of St. Sampson was not visible from this place, but he could see the tips of masts above the trees. The sea-gulls flew wide and afar. Gilliatt had heard his mother say that women could love men ; that such things happened sometimes. He remembered it ; and said within himself, ‘ Who knows, may not Déruchette love me ? ’ Then a feeling of sadness would come upon him ; he would say, ‘ She, too, thinks of me in her turn. It is well.’ He remembered that Déruchette was rich, and that he was poor : and then the new boat appeared to him an execrable invention.

He could never remember what day of the month it was. He would stare listlessly at the great bees, with their yellow bodies and their short wings, as they entered with a buzzing noise into the holes in the wall.

One evening Déruchette went in-doors to retire to bed. She approached her window to close it. The night was dark. Suddenly something caught her ear, and she listened. Somewhere in the darkness there was a sound of music. It was some one, perhaps, on the hill-side, or at the foot of the towers of Vale Castle, or, perhaps, further still, playing an air upon some instrument. Déruchette recognised her favourite melody, 'Bonnie Dundee,' played upon the bag-pipe. She thought little of it.

From that night the music might be heard again from time to time at the same hours, particularly when the nights were very dark.

Déruchette was not much pleased with all this.

IV.

‘A serenade by night may please a lady fair,
 But of uncle and of guardian let the troubadour beware.”
Unpublished Comedy.

FOUR years passed away.

Déruchette was approaching her twenty-first year, and was still unmarried. Some writer has said that a fixed idea is a sort of gimlet; every year gives it another turn; to pull it out the first year is like plucking out the hair by the roots; in the second year, like tearing the skin; in the third, like breaking

the bones ; and in the fourth, like removing the very brain itself.

Gilliatt had arrived at this fourth stage.

He had never yet spoken a word to Déruchette. He lived and dreamed near that delightful vision. This was all.

It happened one day that, finding himself by chance at St. Sampson, he had seen Déruchette talking with Mess Lethierry at the door of the Bravées, which opened upon the roadway of the port. Gilliatt ventured to approach very near. He fancied that at the very moment of his passing she had smiled. There was nothing impossible in that.

Déruchette still heard, from time to time, the sound of the bag-pipe.

Mess Lethierry had also heard this bag-pipe. By degrees he had come to remark this persevering musician under Déruchette's window. A tender strain, too ; all the more suspicious. A nocturnal gallant was a thing not to his taste. His wish was to marry Déruchette in his own time, when she was willing and he was

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willing, purely and simply, without any romance, or music, or anything of that sort. Irritated at it, he had at last kept a watch, and he fancied that he had detected Gilliatt. He passed his fingers through his beard—a sign of anger—and grumbled out, ‘What has that fellow got to pipe about? He is in love with Déruchette, that is clear. You waste your time, young man. Any one who wants Déruchette must come to me, and not loiter about playing the flute.’

An event of importance, long foreseen, occurred soon afterwards. It was announced that the Reverend Jaquemin Hérode was appointed Surrogate of the Bishop of Winchester, Dean of the island, and Rector of St. Peter’s Port, and that he would leave St. Sampson for St. Peter’s immediately after his successor should be installed.

It could not be long to the arrival of the new rector. He was a gentleman of Norman extraction, Monsieur Ebenezer Caudray.

Some facts were known about the new rector,

which the benevolent and malevolent interpreted in a contrary sense. He was known to be young and poor, but his youth was tempered with much learning, and his poverty by good expectations. In the dialect specially invented for the subject of riches and inheritances, death goes by the name of ‘expectations.’ He was the nephew and heir of the aged and opulent Dean of St. Asaph. At the death of this old gentleman he would be a rich man. Monsieur Caudray had distinguished relations. He was almost entitled to the quality of ‘Honourable.’ As regarded his doctrine, people judged differently. He was an Anglican, but, according to the expression of Bishop Tillotson, a ‘libertine’—that is, in reality, one who was very severe. He repudiated all pharisaism. He was a friend rather of the Presbytery than the Episcopacy. He dreamed of the Primitive Church of the days when even Adam had the right to choose his Eve, and when Frumentinus, Bishop of Hierapolis, carried off a young maiden to make her his wife, and said to her parents, ‘Her will is

such, and such is mine. You are no longer her mother, and you are no longer her father. I am the Bishop of Hierapolis, and this is my wife. Her father is in Heaven.' If the common belief could be trusted, M. Caudray subordinated the text, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' to that other text, in his eyes of higher significance, 'The woman is the flesh of the man. She shall leave her father and mother, to follow her husband.' This tendency, however, to circumscribe the parental authority and to favour religiously every mode of forming the conjugal tie, is peculiar to all Protestantism, particularly in England, and singularly so in America.

V.

A DESERVED SUCCESS HAS ALWAYS ITS
DETRACTORS.

AT this period the affairs of Mess Lethierry were in this position :—The Durande had well fulfilled all his expectations. He had paid his debts, repaired his misfortunes, discharged his obligations at Brême, met his acceptances at Saint Malo. He had paid off the mortgage upon his house at the Bravées, and had bought up all the little local rent-charges upon the property. He was also the proprietor of a

great productive capital. This was the *Durande* herself. The net revenue from the boat was about a thousand pounds sterling per annum, and the traffic was constantly increasing. Strictly speaking, the *Durande* constituted his entire fortune. She was also the fortune of the island. The carriage of cattle being one of the most profitable portions of her trade, he had been obliged, in order to facilitate the stowage, and the embarking and disembarking of animals, to do away with the luggage-boxes and the two boats. It was, perhaps, imprudent. The *Durande* had but one boat—namely, her long-boat; but this was an excellent one.

Ten years had elapsed since Rantaine's robbery.

This prosperity of the *Durande* had its weak point. It inspired no confidence. People regarded it as a risk. Lethierry's good fortune was looked upon as exceptional. He was considered to have gained by a lucky rashness. Some one in the Isle of Wight who had

imitated him had not succeeded. The enterprise had ruined the shareholders. The engines, in fact, were badly constructed. But people shook their heads. Innovations have always to contend with the difficulty, that few wish them well. The least false step compromises them.

One of the commercial oracles of the Channel Islands, a certain banker from Paris, named Jauge, being consulted upon a steamboat speculation, was reported to have turned his back, with the remark, ‘An investment is it you propose to me? Exactly; an investment in smoke.’

On the other hand, the sailing-vessels had no difficulty in finding capitalists to take shares in a venture. Capital, in fact, was obstinately in favour of sails, and as obstinately against boilers and paddle-wheels. At Guernsey, the *Durande* was, indeed, a fact, but steam was not yet an established principle. Such is the fanatical spirit of conservatism in opposition to progress. They said of Lethierry, ‘It is all

very well; but he could not do it a second time.' Far from encouraging, his example inspired timidity. Nobody would have dared to risk another Durande.

VI.

THE equinoctial gales begin early in the Channel. The sea there is narrow, and the winds disturb it easily. The westerly gales begin from the month of February, and the waves are beaten about from every quarter. Navigation becomes an anxious matter. The people on the coasts look to the signal-post, and begin to watch for vessels in distress. The sea is then like a cut-throat in ambush for his victim. An invisible trumpet sounds the alarm

of war with the elements, furious blasts spring up from the horizon, and a terrible wind soon begins to blow. The dark night whistles and howls. In the depth of the clouds the black tempest distends its cheeks, and the storm arises.

The wind is one danger; the fogs are another.

Fogs have from all time been the terror of mariners. In certain fogs microscopic prisms of ice are found in suspension, to which Mariotte attributes halos, mock suns, and paraselenes. Storm-fogs are of a composite character: various gases of unequal specific gravity combine with the vapour of water, and arrange themselves, layer over layer, in an order which divides the dense mist into zones. Below ranges the iodine; above the iodine is the sulphur; above the sulphur the brome; above the brome the phosphorus. This, in a certain manner, and making allowance for electric and magnetic tension, explains several phenomena, as the St. Elmo's Fire of Columbus and Magellan, the

flying stars moving about the ships of which Seneca speaks; the two flames, Castor and Pollux, mentioned by Plutarch; the Roman legion whose spears appeared to Cæsar to take fire; the peak of the Chateau of Duino in Friuli, which the sentinel made to sparkle by touching it with his lance; and perhaps even those fulgurations from the earth which the ancients called Saturn's terrestrial lightnings. At the equator, an immense mist seems permanently to encircle the globe. It is known as the cloud-ring: the function of the cloud-ring is to temper the heat of the tropics, as that of the Gulf-stream is to mitigate the coldness of the Pole. Under the cloud-ring fogs are fatal. These are what are called *horse latitudes*. It was here that navigators of bygone ages were accustomed to cast their horses into the sea to lighten the ship in stormy weather, and to economize the fresh water when becalmed. Columbus said, '*Nube abaxo ex morte*,'—death lurks in the low cloud. The Etruscans, who bear the same relation to meteorology which

the Chaldeans did to astronomy, had two high priests—the high priest of the thunder, and the high priest of the clouds. The ‘fulgurators’ observed the lightning, and the weather sages watched the mists. The college of Priest-Augurs was consulted by the Syrians, the Phœnicians, the Pelasgi, and all the primitive navigators of the ancient *Mare Internum*. The origin of tempests was from that time forward partially understood. It is intimately connected with the generation of fogs, and is, properly speaking, the same phenomenon. There exist upon the ocean three regions of fogs—one equatorial and two polar. The mariners give them but one name, the *pitch-pot*.

In all latitudes, and particularly in the Channel, the equinoctial fogs are dangerous. They shed a sudden darkness over the sea. One of the perils of fogs, even, when not very dense, arises from their preventing the mariners perceiving the change of the bed of the sea by the variations of the colour of the water. The result is a dangerous concealment of the ap-

proach of sands and breakers. The vessel steers towards the shoals without receiving any warning. Frequently the fogs leave a ship no resource except to lie-to, or to cast anchor. There are as many shipwrecks from the fogs as from the winds.

After a very violent squall succeeding one of these foggy days, the mail-boat *Cashmere* arrived safely from England. It entered at St. Peter's Port as the first gleam of day appeared upon the sea, and at the very moment when the cannon of Castle Cornet announced the break of day. The sky had cleared; the sloop *Cashmere* was anxiously expected, as she was to bring the new rector of St. Sampson.

A little after the arrival of the sloop, a rumour ran through the town that she had been hailed during the night at sea by a longboat containing a shipwrecked crew.

VII.

HOW AN IDLER HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO BE
SEEN BY A FISHERMAN.

ON that very night, at the moment when the wind abated, Gilliatt had gone out with his nets, without, however, taking his famous old Dutch boat too far from the coast.

As he was returning with the rising tide, towards two o'clock in the afternoon, the sun was shining brightly, and he passed before the Beast's Horn to reach the little bay of the Bû de la Rue. At that moment he fancied that

he saw, in the projection of the 'Gild-Holm-'Ur' seat a shadow, which was not that of the rock. He steered his vessel nearer, and was able to perceive a man sitting in the 'Gild-Holm-'Ur.' The sea was already very high—the rock encircled by the waves—and escape entirely cut off. Gilliatt made signs to the man. The stranger remained motionless. Gilliatt drew nearer ;—the man was asleep.

He was attired in black. 'He looks like a priest,' thought Gilliatt. He approached still nearer, and could distinguish the face of a young man.

The features were unknown to him.

The rock, happily, was peaked ; there was a good depth. Gilliatt wore off, and succeeded in skirting the rocky wall. The tide raised the bark so high, that Gilliatt, by standing upon the gunwale of the sloop, could touch the man's feet. He raised himself upon the planking, and stretched out his hands. If he had fallen at that moment, it is doubtful if he would have risen again on the water ; the waves were

rolling in between the boat and the rock, and destruction would have been inevitable. He pulled the foot of the sleeping man. 'Ho! there. What are you doing in this place?'

The man aroused, and muttered—

'I was looking about.'

He was now completely awake, and continued:

'I have just arrived in this part. I came this way on a pleasure trip. I have passed the night on the sea: the view from here seemed beautiful. I was weary, and fell asleep.'

'Ten minutes later, and you would have been drowned.'

'Ha!'

'Jump into my bark!'

Gilliatt kept the bark fast with his foot, clutched the rock with one hand, and stretched out the other to the stranger in black, who sprang quickly into the boat. He was a fine young man.

Gilliatt seized the tiller, and in two minutes his boat entered the bay of the Bû de la Rue.

The young man wore a round hat and a white

cravat; and his long black frock-coat was buttoned up to the neck. He had fair hair, which he wore *en couronne*. He had a somewhat feminine cast of features, a clear eye, a grave manner.

Meanwhile the boat had touched the ground. Gilliatt passed the cable through the mooring-ring, then turned and perceived the young man holding out a sovereign in a very white hand.

Gilliatt moved the hand gently away.

There was a pause. The young man was the first to break the silence.

‘You have saved me from death.’

‘Perhaps,’ replied Gilliatt.

The moorings were made fast, and they went ashore.

The stranger continued:

‘I owe you my life, sir.’

‘No matter.’

This reply from Gilliatt was again followed by a pause.

‘Do you belong to this parish?’

‘No,’ replied Gilliatt.

‘To what parish, then?’

Gilliatt lifted up his right hand, pointed to the sky, and said—

‘To that yonder.’

The young man bowed, and left him.

After walking a few paces, the stranger stopped, felt in his pocket, drew out a book, and returning towards Gilliatt, offered it to him.

‘Permit me to make you a present of this.’

Gilliatt took the volume.

It was a Bible.

An instant after, Gilliatt, leaning upon the parapet, was following the young man with his eyes as he turned the angle of the path which led to St. Sampson.

By little and little he lowered his gaze, forgot all about the stranger—knew no more whether the ‘Gild-holm-’Ur’ existed. Everything disappeared before him in the bottomless depth of a reverie.

There was one abyss which swallowed up all his thoughts. This was *Déruchette*.

A voice calling him, aroused him from this dream.

‘Ho, there! Gilliatt!’

He recognized the voice and looked up.

‘What is the matter, *Sieur Landoys*?’

It was, in fact, *Sieur Landoys*, who was passing along the road about one hundred paces from the *Bû de la Rue* in his phaeton, drawn by one little horse. He had stopped to hail Gilliatt, but he seemed hurried.

‘There is news, Gilliatt.’

‘Where is that?’

‘At the *Bravées*.’

‘What is it?’

‘I am too far off to tell you the story.’

Gilliatt shuddered.

‘Is Miss *Déruchette* going to be married?’

‘No; but she had better look out for a husband.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Go up to the house, and you will learn.’

And *Sieur Landoys* whipped on his horse.

BOOK V.

THE REVOLVER.



I.

CONVERSATIONS AT THE JEAN AUBERGE.

SIEUR CLUBIN was a man who bided his time. He was short in stature, and his complexion was yellow. He had the strength of a bull. His sea life had not tanned his skin; his flesh had a sallow hue; it was the colour of a wax candle, of which his eyes, too, had something of the steady light. His memory was peculiarly retentive. With him,

to have seen a man once, was to have him like a note in a note-book. His quiet glance took possession of you. The pupil of his eye received the impression of a face, and kept it like a portrait. The face might grow old, but *Sieur Clubin* never lost it; it was impossible to cheat that tenacious memory. *Sieur Clubin* was curt in speech, grave in manner, bold in action. No gestures were ever indulged in by him. An air of candour won everybody to him at first; many people thought him artless. He had a wrinkle in the corner of his eye, astonishingly expressive of simplicity. As we have said, no abler mariner existed; no one like him for reefing a sail, for keeping a vessel's head to the wind, or the sails well set. Never did reputation for religion and integrity stand higher than his. To have suspected him would have been to bring yourself under suspicion. He was on terms of intimacy with *Monsieur Rébuchet*, a money-changer at *St. Malo*, who lived in the *Rue St. Vincent*, next door to the armourer's; and *Monsieur Rébuchet* would

say, 'I would leave my shop in Clubin's hands.'

Sieur Clubin was a widower; his wife, like himself, had enjoyed a high reputation for probity. She had died with a fame for incorruptible virtue. If the Bailli had whispered gallant things in her ear, she would have impeached him before the king. If a saint had made love to her, she would have told it to the priest. This couple, Sieur and Dame Clubin, had realized in Torteval the ideal of the English epithet 'respectable.' Dame Clubin's reputation was as the snowy whiteness of the swan; Sieur Clubin's like that of ermine itself—a spot would have been fatal to him. He could hardly have picked up a pin without making inquiries for the owner. He would send round the town-crier about a box of matches. One day he went into a wine shop at St. Servan, and said to the man who kept it, 'Three years ago I breakfasted here, you made a mistake in the bill,' and he returned the man thirteen sous. He was the

very personification of probity, with a certain compression of the lips indicative of watchfulness.

He seemed, indeed, always on the watch—for what? For rogues, probably.

Every Tuesday he commanded the *Durande* on her passage from Guernsey to St. Malo. He arrived at St. Malo on the Tuesday evening, stayed two days there to discharge and take in a new cargo, and started again for Guernsey on Friday morning.

There was at that period at St. Malo a little tavern near the harbour, which was called the ‘Jean Auberge.’

The construction of the modern quays swept away this house. At this period, the sea came up as far as the St. Vincent and Dinan gates. St. Merlan and St. Servan communicated with each other by covered carts and other vehicles, which passed to and fro among vessels lying high and dry, avoiding the buoys, the anchors, and cables, and running the risk now and then of smashing their leathern hoods

against the lowered yards, or the end of a jibboom. Between the tides, the coachmen drove their horses over those sands where six hours afterwards the winds would be beating the rolling waves. The four-and-twenty carrying dogs of St. Malo, who tore to pieces a naval officer in 1770, were accustomed to prowl about this beach. This excess of zeal on their part led to the destruction of the pack. Their nocturnal barkings are no longer heard between the little and the great Talard.

Sieur Clubin was accustomed to stay at the Jean Auberge. The French office of the Durande was held there.

The custom-house officers and coast-guard-men came to take their meals and to drink at the Jean Auberge. They had their separate tables. The custom-house officers of Binic found it convenient for the service to meet there with their brother officers of St. Malo.

Captains of vessels came there also; but they ate at another table.

Sieur Clubin sat sometimes at one, sometimes

at the other table, but preferred the table of the custom-house men to that of the sea captains. He was always welcome at either.

The tables were well served. There were strange drinks specially provided for foreign sailors. A dandy sailor from Bilboa could have been supplied there with a *helada*. People drank stout there, as at Greenwich, or brown *gueuse*, as at Antwerp.

Masters of vessels who came from long voyages and privateersmen sometimes appeared at the captains' table, where they exchanged news. 'How are sugars? That commission is only for small lots.—The brown kinds, however are going off. Three thousand bags of East India, and five hundred hogsheads of Sagua.—Take my word, the opposition will end by defeating Villèle.—What about indigo? Only seven serons of Guatemala changed hands.—The "Nanine-Julia" is in the roads; a pretty three-master from Brittany.—The two cities of La Plata are at loggerheads again.—When Monte Video gets fat, Buenos Ayres

grows lean.—It has been found necessary to transfer the cargo of the “Regina-Cœli,” which has been condemned at Callao.—Cocoas go off briskly.—Caraque bags are quoted at one hundred and thirty-four, and Trinidad’s at seventy-three.—It appears that at the review in the Champ de Mars, the people cried, “Down with the ministers!”—The raw salt Saladeros hides are selling—ox-hides at sixty francs, and cows’ at forty-eight.—Have they passed the Balkan?—What is Diebitsch about?—Aniseed is in demand at San Francisco. Plagniol olive oil is quiet.—Gruyère cheese, in bulk, is thirty-two francs the quintal.—Well, is Leon XII. dead, &c., &c.

All these things were talked about and commented on aloud. At the table of the custom-house and coast-guard officers they spoke in a lower key.

Matters of police and revenue on the coast and in the ports require, in fact, a little more privacy, and a little less clearness in the conversation. . .

The sea captains' table was presided over by an old captain of a large vessel, M. Gertrais-Gaboureau. M. Gertrais-Gaboureau could hardly be regarded as a man; he was rather a living barometer. His long life at sea had given him a surprising power of prognosticating the state of the weather. He seemed to issue a decree for the weather to-morrow. He sounded the winds, and felt the pulse, as it were, of the tides. He might be imagined requesting the clouds to show their tongue—that is to say, their forked lightnings. He was the physician of the wave, the breeze, and the squall. The ocean was his patient. He had travelled round the world like a doctor going his visits, examining every kind of climate in its good and bad condition. He was profoundly versed in the pathology of the seasons. Sometimes he would be heard delivering himself in this fashion :—‘ The barometer descended in 1796 to three degrees below tempest point.’ He was a sailor from real love of the sea. He hated England as

much as he liked the ocean. He had carefully studied English seamanship, and considered himself to have discovered its weak point. He would explain how the 'Sovereign' of 1637 differed from the 'Royal William' of 1670, and from the 'Victory' of 1775. He compared their build as to their forecastles and quarter-decks. He looked back with regret to the towers upon the deck, and the funnel-shaped tops of the 'Great Harry' of 1514—probably regarding them from the point of view of convenient lodging places for French cannon-balls. In his eyes, nations only existed for their naval institutions. He indulged in some odd figures of speech on this subject. He considered the term 'The Trinity House,' as sufficiently indicating England. The 'Northern Commissioners' were in like manner synonymous in his mind with Scotland; the 'Ballast Board,' with Ireland. He was full of nautical information. He was, in himself, a marine alphabet and almanack, a tariff, and low-water mark all combined. He knew by heart all the lighthouse

dues—particularly those of the English coast—one penny per ton for passing before this ; one farthing before that. He would tell you that the Small Rock Light which once used to burn two hundred gallons of oil, now consumes fifteen hundred. Once, aboard ship, he was attacked by a dangerous disease, and was believed to be dying. The crew assembled round his hammock, and in the midst of his groans and agony, he addressed the chief carpenter with the words, ‘You had better make a mortice in each side of the main caps, and put in a bit of iron to help pass the top ropes through.’ His habit of command had given to his countenance an expression of authority.

It was rare that the subjects of conversation at the captains’ table and at that of the custom-house men were the same. This, however, did happen to be the case in the first days of that month of February, to which the course of this history has now brought us. The three-master ‘Tamaulipas,’ Captain Zuela, arrived from Chili,

and bound thither again, was the theme of discussion at both tables.

At the captains' table they were talking of her cargo; and at that of the custom-house people, of certain circumstances connected with her recent proceedings.

Captain Zuela, of Copiapo, was partly a Chilean and partly a Columbian. He had taken a part in the war of Independence in a true independent fashion, adhering sometimes to Bolivar, sometimes to Morillo, according as he had found it to his interest. He had enriched himself by serving all causes. No man in the world could have been more Bourbonist, more Bonapartist, more absolutist, more liberal, more atheistical, or more devoutly catholic. He belonged to that great and renowned party which may be called the Lucrative party. From time to time he made his appearance in France on commercial voyages; and, if report spoke truly, he willingly gave a passage to fugitives of any kind—bankrupts or political refugees, it was all the

same to him, provided they could pay. His mode of taking them aboard was simple. The fugitive waited upon a lonely point of the coast, and at the moment of setting sail, Zuela would detach a small boat to fetch him. On his last voyage he had assisted in this way an outlaw and fugitive from justice, named Berton; and on this occasion he was suspected of being about to aid the flight of the men implicated in the affair of the *Bidassoa*. The police were informed, and had their eye upon him.

This period was an epoch of flights and escapes. The Restoration in France was a reactionary movement. Revolutions are fruitful of voluntary exile; and restorations of wholesale banishments. During the first seven or eight years which followed the return of the Bourbons, panic was universal—in finance, in industry, in commerce, men felt the ground tremble beneath them. Bankruptcies were numerous in the commercial world; in the political, there was a general rush to escape.

Lavalette had taken flight, Lefebvre Desnouettes had taken flight, Delon had taken flight. Special tribunals were again in fashion—*plus* Trestaillon. People instinctively shunned the Pont de Saumur, the esplanade de la Réole, the wall of the Observatoire in Paris, the tower of Taurias d'Avignon —dismal landmarks in history where the period of reaction has left its sign; spots on which the marks of that blood-stained hand are still visible. In London the Thistlewood affair, with its ramifications in France; in Paris the Trogoff trial, with its ramifications in Belgium, Switzerland, and Italy, had increased the motives for anxiety and flight, and given an impetus to that mysterious rout which left so many gaps in the social system of that day. To find a place of safety, this was the general care. To be implicated was to be ruined. The spirit of the military tribunals had survived their institution. Sentences were matters of favour. People fled to Texas, to the Rocky Mountains, to Peru, to Mexico. The men of the Loire,

traitors then, but now regarded as patriots, had founded the *champ d'Asile*. Beranger in one of his songs says—

‘Barbarians! we are Frenchmen born ;
Pity us, glorious, yet forlorn.’

Self-banishment was the only resource left. Nothing, perhaps, seems simpler than flight, but that monosyllable has a terrible significance. Every obstacle is in the way of the man who slips away. Taking to flight necessitates disguise. Persons of importance—even illustrious characters—were reduced to these expedients, only fit for malefactors. Their independent habits rendered it difficult for them to escape through the meshes of authority. A rogue who violates the conditions of his ticket-of-leave comports himself before the police as innocently as a saint ; but imagine innocence constrained to act a part ; virtue disguising its voice ; a glorious reputation hiding under a mask. Yonder passer-by is a man of well-earned celebrity ; he is in quest of a false passport. The equivocal proceedings of one ab-

scending from the reach of the law is no proof that he is not a hero. Ephemeral but characteristic features of the time of which our so-called regular history takes no note, but which the true painter of the age will bring out into relief. Under cover of these flights and concealments of honest men, genuine rogues, less watched and suspected, managed often to get clear off. A scoundrel, who found it convenient to disappear, would take advantage of the general pell-mell, tack himself on to the political refugees, and, thanks to his greater skill in the art, would contrive to appear in that dim twilight more honest even than his honest neighbours. Nothing looks more awkward and confused sometimes than honesty unjustly condemned. It is out of its element, and is almost sure to commit itself.

It is a curious fact, that this voluntary expatriation, particularly with honest folks, appeared to lead to every strange turn of fortune. The modicum of civilization which a scamp brought with him from London or Paris became, perhaps,

a valuable stock in trade in some primitive country, ingratiated him with the people, and enabled him to strike into new paths. There is nothing impossible in a man's escaping thus from the laws, to reappear elsewhere as a dignitary among the priesthood. There was something phantasmagorial in these sudden disappearances; and more than one such flight has led to events like the marvels of a dream. An escapade of this kind, indeed, seemed to end naturally in the wild and wonderful; as when some broken bankrupt suddenly decamps to turn up again twenty years later as Grand Vizier to the Mogul or as a king in Tasmania.

Rendering assistance to these fugitives was an established trade, and looking to the abundance of business of that kind, was a highly profitable one. It was generally carried on as a supplementary branch of certain recognized kinds of commerce. A person, for instance, desiring to escape to England, applied to the smugglers; one who desired to get to America, had recourse to sea-captains like Zuela.

II.

CLUBIN OBSERVES SOMEONE.

ZUELA came sometimes to take refreshment at the Jean Auberge. Clubin knew him by sight.

For that matter Clubin was not proud. He did not disdain even to know scamps by sight. He went so far sometimes as to cultivate even a closer acquaintance with them; giving his hand in the open street, or saying good-day to them. He talked English with the smugglers, and jabbered Spanish with the

contrebandistas. On this subject he had at command a number of apologetic phrases. 'Good,' he said, 'can be extracted out of the knowledge of evil. The gamekeeper may find advantage in knowing the poacher. The good pilot may sound the depths of a pirate, who is only a sort of hidden rock. I test the quality of a scoundrel as a doctor will test a poison.' There was no answering a battery of proverbs like this. Everybody gave Clubin credit for his shrewdness. People praised him for not indulging in a ridiculous delicacy. Who, then, should dare to speak scandal of him on this point? Everything he did was evidently 'for the good of the service.' With him, all was straightforward. Nothing could stain his good fame. Crystal might more easily become sullied. This general confidence in him was the natural reward of a long life of integrity, the crowning advantage of a settled reputation. Whatever Clubin might do, or appear to do, was sure to be interpreted favourably. He had attained almost to a state of impeccability.

Over and above this, 'he is very wary,' people said : and from a situation which in others would have given rise to suspicion, his integrity would extricate itself, with a still greater halo of reputation for ability. This reputation for ability mingled harmoniously with his fame for perfect simplicity of character. Great simplicity and great talents in conjunction are not uncommon. The compound constitutes one of the varieties of the virtuous man, and one of the most valuable. *Sieur Clubin* was one of those men who might be found in intimate conversation with a sharper or a thief, without suffering any diminution of respect in the minds of their neighbours.

The '*Tamaulipas*' had completed her loading. She was ready for sea, and was preparing to sail very shortly.

One Tuesday evening the *Durande* arrived at St. Malo while it was still broad daylight. *Sieur Clubin*, standing upon the bridge of the vessel, and superintending the manœuvres necessary for getting her into port, perceived

upon the sandy beach, near the Petit-Bey, two men, who were conversing between the rocks in a solitary spot. He observed them with his sea-glass, and recognized one of the men. It was Captain Zuela. He seemed to recognize the other also.

This other was a person of high stature, a little grey. He wore the broad-brimmed hat and the sober clothing of the Society of Friends. He was probably a Quaker. He lowered his gaze with an air of extreme diffidence.

On arriving at the Jean Auberge, Sieur Clubin learnt that the 'Tamaulipas' was preparing to sail in about ten days.

It has since become known that he obtained information on some other points.

That night he entered the gunsmith's shop in St. Vincent Street, and said to the master:

'Do you know what a revolver is?'

'Yes,' replied the gunsmith. 'It is an American weapon.'

'It is a pistol, with which a man can carry on a conversation.'

‘Exactly : an instrument which comprises in itself both the question and the answer.’

‘And the rejoinder too.’

‘Precisely, Monsieur Clubin. A rotatory clump of barrels.’

‘I shall want five or six balls.’

The gunmaker twisted the corner of his lip, and made that peculiar noise with which, when accompanied by a toss of the head, Frenchmen express admiration.

‘The weapon is a good one, Monsieur Clubin.’

‘I want a revolver with six barrels.’

‘I have not one.’

‘What ! and you a gunmaker !’

‘I do not keep such articles yet. You see it is a new thing. It is only just coming into vogue. French makers as yet confine themselves to the simple pistol.’

‘Nonsense.’

‘It has not yet become an article of commerce.’

‘Nonsense, I say.’

‘I have excellent pistols.’

‘I want a revolver.’

‘I agree that it is more useful. Stop, Monsieur Clubin!’

‘What?’

‘I believe I know where there is one at this moment in St. Malo; to be had a bargain.’

‘A revolver?’

‘Yes,’

‘For sale?’

‘Yes.’

‘Where is that?’

‘I believe I know; or I can find out.’

‘When can you give me an answer?’

‘A bargain; but of good quality.’

‘When shall I return?’

‘If I procure you a revolver, remember, it will be a good one.’

‘When will you give me an answer?’

‘After your next voyage.’

‘Do not mention that it is for me,’ said Clubin.

III.

CLUBIN CARRIES AWAY SOMETHING AND
BRINGS BACK NOTHING.

SIEUR CLUBIN completed the loading of the *Durande*, embarked a number of cattle and some passengers, and left St. Malo for Guernsey as usual on the Friday morning.

On that same Friday, when the vessel had gained the open, which permits the captain to absent himself a moment from the place of command, Clubin entered his cabin, shut himself in, took a travelling bag which he kept there, put into one of its compartments some

biscuit, some boxes of preserves, a few pounds of chocolate in sticks, a chronometer, and a sea telescope, and passed through the handles a cord, ready prepared to sling it if necessary. Then he descended into the hold, went into the compartment where the cables are kept, and was seen to come up again with one of those knotted ropes heavy with pieces of metal, which are used for ship caulkers at sea and by robbers ashore. Cords of this kind are useful in climbing

Having arrived at Guernsey, Clubin repaired to Torteval. He took with him the travelling bag, and the knotted cord, but did not bring them back again.

Let us repeat once for all, the Guernsey which we are describing is that ancient Guernsey which no longer exists, and of which it would be impossible to find a parallel now anywhere except in the country. There it is still flourishing, but in the towns it has passed away. The same remarks apply to Jersey. St. Heliers is as civilized as Dieppe, St. Peter's Port as L'Orient.

Thanks to the progress of civilization, thanks to the admirably enterprising spirit of that brave island people, everything has been changed during the last forty years in the Norman archipelago. Where there was darkness there is now light. With these premises, let us proceed.

At that period, then, which is already so far removed from us as to have become historical, smuggling was carried on very extensively in the Channel. The smuggling vessels abounded, particularly on the western coast of Guernsey. People of that peculiarly clever kind who know, even in the smallest details, what went on half-a-century ago, will even cite you the names of these suspicious craft, which were almost always Asturians or Guiposcaus. It is certain that a week scarcely ever passed without one or two being seen either in Saint's Bay or at Pleinmont. Their coming and going had almost the character of a regular service. A cavern in the cliffs at Sark was called then, and is still called, the 'Shops' ('Les Boutiques'), from its being

the place where these smugglers made their bargains with the purchasers of their merchandize. This sort of traffic had in the channel a dialect of its own, a vocabulary of contraband technicalities now forgotten, and which was to the Spanish what the 'Levantine' is to the Italian.

On many parts of the English coast smuggling had a secret but cordial understanding with legitimate and open commerce. It had access to the house of more than one great financier, by the back-stairs it is true; and its influence extended itself mysteriously through all the commercial world, and the intricate ramifications of manufacturing industry. Merchant on one side, smuggler on the other; such was the key to the secret of many great fortunes. Séguin affirmed it of Bourgain, Bourgain of Séguin. We do not vouch for their accusations; it is possible that they were calumniating each other. However this may have been, it is certain that the contraband trade, though hunted down by the law, was flourishing enough in certain finan-

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cial circles. It had relations with 'the very best society.' Thus the brigand Mandrin in other days found himself occasionally tête-à-tête with the Count of Charolais; for this under-hand trade often contrived to put on a very respectable appearance; kept a house of its own with an irreproachable exterior.

All this necessitated a host of manœuvres and connivances, which required impenetrable secrecy. A contrabandist was entrusted with a good many things, and knew how to keep them secret. An inviolable confidence was the condition of his existence. The first quality, in fact, in a smuggler, was strict honour in his own circle. No discreetness, no smuggling. Fraud has its secrets like the priest's confessional.

These secrets were indeed, as a rule, faithfully kept. The contrabandist swore to betray nothing, and he kept his word; nobody was more trustworthy than the genuine smuggler. The Judge Alcade of Oyarzun captured a smuggler one day, and put him to torture to compel

him to disclose the name of the capitalist who secretly supported him. The smuggler refused to tell. The capitalist in question was the Judge Alcade himself. Of these two accomplices, the judge and the smuggler, the one had been compelled, in order to appear in the eyes of the world to fulfil the law, to put the other to the torture; which the other had patiently borne for the sake of his oath.

The two most famous smugglers who haunted Pleinmont at that period were Blasco and Blasquito. They were *Tocay's*. This was a sort of Spanish or Catholic relationship which consisted in having the same patron saint in heaven; a thing, it will be admitted, not less worthy of consideration than having the same father upon earth.

When a person was initiated into the furtive ways of the contraband business, nothing was more easy, or from a certain point of view more troublesome. It was sufficient to have no fear of dark nights, to repair to Pleinmont, and to consult the oracle located there.

IV.

PLEINMONT.

PLEINMONT, near Torteval, is one of the three corners of the island of Guernsey. At the extremity of the cape there rises a high turfy hill, which looks over the sea.

The height is a lonely place. All the more lonely from there being one solitary house there.

This house adds a sense of terror to that of solitude.

It is popularly believed to be haunted.

Haunted or not, its aspect is singular.

Built of granite, and rising only one storey high, it stands in the midst of the grassy solitude. It is in a perfectly good condition as far as exterior is concerned; the walls are thick and the roof is sound. Not a stone is wanting in the sides, not a tile upon the roof. A brick-built chimney-stack forms the angle of the roof. The building turns its back to the sea, being on that side merely a blank wall. On examining this wall, however, attentively, the visitor perceives a little window bricked up. The two gables have three dormer windows, one fronting the east, the others fronting the west, but both are bricked up in like manner. The front, which looks inland, has alone a door and windows. This door, too, is walled in, as are also the two windows of the ground-floor. On the first floor—and this is the feature which is most striking as you approach—there are two open windows; but these are even more suspicious than the blind windows. Their open squares look dark even in broad day, for they have no panes

of glass, or even window-frames. They open simply upon the dusk within. They strike the imagination like hollow eye-sockets in a human face. Inside all is deserted. Through the gaping casements you may mark the ruin within. No panellings, no woodwork; all bare stone. It is like a windowed sepulchre, giving liberty to the spectres to look out upon the daylight world. The rains sap the foundations on the seaward side. A few nettles, shaken by the breeze, flourish in the lower part of the walls. Far around the horizon there is no other human habitation. The house is a void; the abode of silence: but if you place your ear against the wall and listen, you may distinguish a confused noise now and then, like the flutter of wings. Over the walled door, upon the stone which forms its architrave, are sculptured these letters, 'ELM-PHILG,' with the date '1780.'

The dark shadow of night and the mournful light of the moon find entrance there.

The sea completely surrounds the house. I

situation is magnificent ; but for that reason its aspect is more sinister. The beauty of the spot becomes a puzzle. Why does not a human family take up its abode here ? The place is beautiful, the house well built. Whence this neglect ? To these questions, obvious to the reason, succeed others, suggested by the reverie which the place inspires. Why is this cultivatable garden uncultivated ? No master for it ; and the bricked-up doorway ? What has happened to the place ? Why is it shunned by men ? What business is done here ? If none, why is there no one here ? Is it only when all the rest of the world are asleep, that some one in this spot is awake ? Dark squalls, wild winds, birds of prey, strange creatures, . unknown forms, present themselves to the mind, and connect themselves somehow with this deserted house. For what class of wayfarers can this be the hostelry ? You imagine to yourself whirlwinds of rain and hail beating in at the open casements, and wandering through the rooms Tempests have left their vague traces upon the

interior walls. The chambers, though walled and covered in, are visited by the hurricanes. Has the house been the scene of some great crime? You may almost fancy that this spectral dwelling, given up to solitude and darkness, might be heard calling aloud for succour. Does it remain silent? Do voices indeed issue from it? What business has it on hand in this lonely place? The mystery of the dark hours rests securely here. Its aspect is disquieting at noon-day; what must it be at midnight? The dreamer asks himself—for dreams have their coherence—what this house may be between the dusk of evening and the twilight of approaching dawn? Has the vast supernatural world some relation with this deserted height, which sometimes compels it to arrest its movements here, and to descend and to become visible? Do the scattered elements of the spirit world whirl around it? Does the impalpable take form and substance here? Insoluble riddles! A holy awe is in the very stones; that dim twilight has surely relations

with the infinite Unknown. When the sun has gone down, the song of the birds will be hushed, the goatherd behind the hill will go homeward with his goats; reptiles, taking courage from the gathering darkness, will creep through the fissures of rocks; the stars will begin to appear, night will come, but yonder two blank casements will still be staring at the sky. They open to welcome spirits and apparitions; for it is by the names of apparitions, ghosts, phantom faces vaguely distinct, masks in the lurid light, mysterious movements of minds, and shadows, that the popular faith, at once ignorant and profound, translates the sombre relations of this dwelling with the world of darkness.

The house is 'haunted;' the popular phrase comprises everything.

Credulous minds have their explanation; common-sense thinkers have theirs also. 'Nothing is more simple,' say the latter, 'than the history of the house. It is an old observatory of the time of the Revolutionary Wars and the days of smuggling. It was built for

such objects. The wars being ended, the house was abandoned ; but it was not pulled down, as it might one day again become useful. The door and windows have been walled to prevent people entering, or doing injury to the interior. The walls of the windows, on the three sides which face the sea, have been bricked up against the winds of the south and south-west. That is all.'

The ignorant and the credulous, however, are not satisfied. In the first place, the house was not built at the period of the wars of the Revolution. It bears the date '1780,' which was anterior to the Revolution. In the next place, it was not built for an observatory. It bears the letters, 'ELM-PBILG,' which are the double monogram of two families, and which indicate, according to usage, that the house was built for the use of a newly married couple. Then it has certainly been inhabited : why then should it be abandoned ? If the door and windows were bricked up to prevent people entering the house only, why were two windows left open ?

Why are there no shutters, no window-frames, no glass? Why were the walls bricked in on one side, if not on the other? The wind is prevented from entering from the south; but why is it allowed to enter from the north?

The credulous are wrong, no doubt; but it is clear that the common-sense thinkers have not discovered the key to the mystery. The problem remains still unsolved.

It is certain that the house is generally believed to have been more useful than inconvenient to the smugglers.

The growth of superstitious terror tends to deprive facts of their true proportions. Without doubt, many of the nocturnal phenomena which have, by little and little, secured to the building the reputation of being haunted might be explained by obscure and furtive visits, by brief sojourns of sailors near the spot, and sometimes by the precaution, sometimes by the daring, of men engaged in certain suspicious occupations concealing themselves for their dark

purposes, or allowing themselves to be seen in order to inspire dread.

At this period, already a remote one, many daring deeds were possible. The police — particularly in small places — was by no means as efficient as in these days.

Add to this, that if the house was really, as was said, a resort of the smugglers, their meetings there must, up to a certain point, have been safe from interruption precisely because the house was dreaded by the superstitious people of the country. Its ghostly reputation prevented its being visited for other reasons. People do not generally apply to the police, or officers of customs, on the subject of spectres. The superstitious rely on making the sign of the cross; not on magistrates and indictments. There is always a tacit connivance, involuntary it may be, but not the less real, between the objects which inspire fear and their victims. The terror-stricken feel a sort of culpability in having encountered their terrors; they imagine themselves to have unveiled a secret; and they

have an inward fear, unknown even to themselves, of aggravating their guilt, and exciting the anger of the apparitions. All this makes them discreet. And over and above this reason, the very instinct of the credulous is silence; dread is akin to dumbness; the terrified speak little; horror seems always to whisper, 'Hush!'

It must be remembered that this was a period when the Guernsey peasants believed that the mystery of the Holy Manger is repeated by oxen and asses every year on a fixed day; a period when no one would have dared to enter a stable at night for fear of coming upon the animals on their knees.

If the local legends and stories of the people can be credited, the popular superstition went so far as to fasten to the walls of the house at Pleinmont, things of which the traces are still visible, rats without feet, bats without wings,* and bodies of other dead animals. Here, too, were seen toads crushed between the pages of a Bible, bunches of yellow lupins, and other strange

offerings, placed there by imprudent passers-by at night, who, having fancied that they had seen something, hoped by these small sacrifices to obtain pardon, and to appease the ill-humours of were-wolves and evil spirits. In all times, believers of this kind have flourished; some even in very high places. Cæsar consulted Saganus, and Napoleon, Mademoiselle Lenormand. There are a kind of consciences so tender, that they must seek indulgencies even from Beelzebub. ‘May God do, and Satan not undo,’ was one of the prayers of Charles the Fifth. They come to persuade themselves that they may commit sins even against the Evil One; and one of their cherished objects is, to be irreproachable even in the eyes of Satan. We find here an explanation of those adorations sometimes paid to infernal spirits. It is only one more species of fanaticism. Sins against the devil undoubtedly exist in certain morbid imaginations. The fancy that they have violated the laws of the lower regions torments certain eccentric casuists; they are haunted with scruples even about

offending the demons. A belief in the efficacy of devotions to the spirits of the Brocken or Armuyr, a notion of having committed sins against Hell, visionary penances for imaginary crimes, avowals of the truth to the spirit of falsehood, self-accusations before the Origin of all evil, and confessions in an inverted sense,—are all realities, or things at least which have existed. The annals of criminal procedure against witchcraft and magic prove this in every page. Human folly unhappily extends even thus far: when terror seizes upon a man he does not stop easily. He dreams of imaginary faults, imaginary purifications, and clears out his conscience with the old witches' broom.

Be this as it may, if the house at Pleinmont had its secrets, it kept them to itself; except by some rare chance, no one went there to see. It was left entirely alone. Few people, indeed, like to run the risk of an encounter with the other world.

Owing to the terror which it inspired and which kept at a distance all who could observe

or bear testimony on the subject, it had always been easy to obtain an entrance there at night by means of a rope-ladder, or even by the use of the first ladder coming to hand in one of the neighbouring fields. A consignment of goods or provisions, left there, might await in perfect safety the time and opportunity for a furtive embarkation. Tradition relates that forty years ago a fugitive—for political offences as some affirm, for commercial as others say—remained for some time concealed in the haunted house at Pleinmont; whence he finally succeeded in embarking in a fishing-boat for England; whence a passage is easily obtained to America.

Tradition also avers that provisions deposited in this house remain there untouched, Lucifer and the smugglers having an interest in inducing whoever places them there to return.

From the summit of this house, there is a view to the south of the Hanway Rocks, at about a mile from the shore.

These rocks are famous. They have been

guilty of all the evil deeds of which rocks are capable. They are the most ruthless destroyers of the sea. They lie in a treacherous ambush for vessels in the night. They have contributed to the enlargement of the cemeteries at Torteval and Rocquaine.

A lighthouse was erected upon these rocks in 1862. At the present day, the Hanways light the way for the vessels which they once lured to destruction; the destroyer in ambush now bears a lighted torch in his hand; and mariners seek in the horizon, as a protector and a guide, the rock which they used to fly as a pitiless enemy. It gives confidence by night in that vast space where it was so long a terror—like a robber converted into a gendarme.

There are three Hanways: the Great Hanway, the Little Hanway, and the Mauve. It is upon the Little Hanway that the Red Light is placed at the present time.

This reef of rocks forms part of a group of peaks, some beneath the sea, some rising out of it. It towers above them all; like a fortress,

it has advanced works: on the side of the open sea, a chain of *thirteen* rocks; on the north, two breakers—the *High Fourquiés*, the *Needles*, and a sandbank called the *Hérouée*. On the south, three rocks—the *Cat Rock*, the *Percée*, and the *Herpin Rock*; then two banks—the *South Bank* and the *Muet*: besides which, there is, on the side opposite *Pleinmont*, the *Tas de Pois d'Aval*.

To swim across the channel from the *Han-*ways to *Pleinmont* is difficult, but not impossible. We have already said that this was one of the achievements of *Clubin*. The expert swimmer who knows this channel can find two resting-places—the *Round Rock*, and further on, a little out of the course, to the left, the *Red Rock*.

V.

THE BIRDS'-NESTERS.

IT was near the period of that Saturday which was passed by Sieur Clubin at Torteval that a curious incident occurred, which was little heard of at the time, and which did not generally transpire till a long time afterwards. For many things, as we have already observed, remain undivulged, simply by reason of the terror which they have caused in those who have witnessed them.

In the night-time between Saturday and

Sunday—we are exact in the matter of the date, and we believe it to be correct—three boys climbed up the hill at Pleinmont. The boys were returning to the village: they came from the seashore. They were what are called, in the corrupt French of that part, ‘déniquoiseaux,’ or birds’-nesters. Wherever there are cliffs and cleft-rocks overhanging the sea, the young birds’-nesters abound. The reader will remember that Gilliatt interfered in this matter for the sake of the birds as well as for the sake of the children.

The ‘déniquoiseaux’ are a sort of sea urchins, and are not a very timid species.

The night was very dark. Dense masses of cloud obscured the zenith. Three o’clock had sounded in the steeple of Torteval, which is round and pointed like a magician’s hat.

Why did the boys return so late? Nothing more simple. They had been searching for sea-gulls’ nests in the Tas de Pois d’Aval. The season having been very mild, the pairing of the birds had begun very early. The children

watching the fluttering of the male and female about their nests, and excited by the pursuit, had forgotten the time. The waters had crept up around them; they had no time to regain the little bay in which they had moored their boat, and they were compelled to wait upon one of the peaks of the Tas de Pois for the ebb of the tide. Hence their late return. Mothers wait on such occasions in feverish anxiety for the return of their children, and when they find them safe, give vent to their joy in the shape of anger, and relieve their tears by dealing them a sound drubbing. The boys accordingly hastened their steps, but in fear and trembling. Their haste was of that sort which is glad of an excuse for stopping, and which is not inconsistent with a reluctance to reach their destination; for they had before them the prospect of warm embraces, to be followed with an inevitable thrashing.

One only of the boys had nothing of this to fear. He was an orphan: a French boy, without father or mother, and perfectly content

just then with his motherless condition; for nobody taking any interest in him, his back was safe from the dreaded blows. The two others were natives of Guernsey, and belonged to the parish of Torteval.

Having climbed the grassy hill, the three birds'-nesters reached the tableland on which was situate the haunted house.

They began by being in fear, which is the proper frame of mind of every passer-by; and particularly of every child at that hour and in that place.

They had a strong desire to take to their heels as fast as possible, and a strong desire, also, to stay and look.

They did stop.

They looked towards the solitary building.

It was all dark and terrible.

It stood in the midst of the solitary plain—an obscure block, a hideous but symmetrical excrescence; a high square mass with right-angled corners, like an immense altar in the darkness.

The first thought of the boys was to run : the second was to draw nearer. They had never seen this house before. There is such a thing as a desire to be frightened arising from curiosity. They had a little French boy with them, which emboldened them to approach.

It is well known that the French have no fear.

Besides, it is reassuring to have company in danger ; to be frightened in the company of two others is encouraging.

And then they were a sort of hunters accustomed to peril. They were children ; they were used to search, to rummage, to spy out hidden things. They were in the habit of peeping into holes ; why not into this hole ? Hunting is exciting. Looking into birds' nests perhaps gives an itch for looking a little into a nest of ghosts. A rummage in the dark regions. Why not ?

From prey to prey, says the proverb, we come to the devil. After the birds, the demons. The boys were on the way to learn the secret of those terrors of which their

parents had told them. To be on the track of hobgoblin tales—nothing could be more attractive. To have long stories to tell like the good housewives. The notion was tempting.

All this mixture of ideas, in their state of half-confusion, half-instinct, in the minds of the Guernsey birds'-nesters, finally screwed their courage to the point. They approached the house.

The little fellow who served them as a sort of moral support in the adventure was certainly worthy of their confidence. He was a bold boy—an apprentice to a ship caulker; one of those children who have already become men. He slept on a little straw in a shed in the ship-caulker's yard, getting his own living, having red hair, and a loud voice; climbing easily up walls and trees, not encumbered with prejudices in the matter of property in the apples within his reach; a lad who had worked in the repairing dock for vessels of war—a child of chance, a happy orphan, born in France, no one knew exactly where; ready to give a centime to a

beggar ; a mischievous fellow, but a good one at heart ; one who had talked to Parisians. At this time he was earning a shilling a day by caulking the fishermen's boats under repair at the Pêqueries. When he felt inclined he gave himself a holiday, and went birds'-nesting. Such was the little French boy.

The solitude of the place impressed them with a strange feeling of dread. They felt the threatening aspect of the silent house. It was wild and savage. The naked and deserted plateau terminated in a precipice at a short distance from its steep incline. The sea below was quiet. There was no wind. Not a blade of grass stirred.

The birds'-nesters advanced by slow steps, the French boy at their head, and looking towards the house.

One of them, afterwards relating the story, or as much of it as had remained in his head, added, 'It did not speak.'

They came nearer, holding their breath, as one might approach a savage animal.

They had climbed the hill at the side of the house which descended to seaward towards a little isthmus of rocks almost inaccessible. Thus they had come pretty near to the building; but they saw only the southern side, which was all walled up. They did not dare to approach by the other side, where the terrible windows were.

They grew bolder, however; the caulker's apprentice whispered, 'Let's veer to starboard. That's the handsome side. Let's have a look at the black windows.'

The little band accordingly 'veered to starboard,' and came round to the other side of the house.

The two windows were lighted up.

The boys took to their heels.

When they had got to some distance, the French boy, however, returned.

'Hillo!' said he, 'the lights have vanished.'

The light at the windows had, indeed, disappeared. The outline of the building was

seen as sharply defined as if stamped out with a punch against the livid sky.

Their fear was not abated, but their curiosity had increased. The birds'-nesters approached.

Suddenly the light re-appeared at both windows at the same moment.

The two young urchins from Torteval took to their heels, and vanished. The daring French boy did not advance; but he kept his ground.

He remained motionless, confronting the house, and watching it.

The light disappeared, and appeared again once more. Nothing could be more horrible: The reflection made a vague streak of light upon the grass, wet with the night dew. All of a moment the light cast upon the walls of the house two huge dark profiles, and the shadows of enormous heads.

The house, however, being without ceilings, and having nothing left but its four walls and roof, one window could not be lighted without the other.

Perceiving that the caulker's apprentice kept his ground, the other 'birds'-nesters returned, step by step, and one after the other, trembling and curious. The caulker's apprentice whispered to them, 'There are ghosts in the house. I have seen the nose of one.' The two Torteval boys got behind their companion, standing tip-toe against his shoulder; and thus sheltered, and taking him for their shield, felt bolder and watched also.

The house on its part seemed also to be watching them. There it stood in the midst of that vast darkness and silence, with its two glaring eyes. These were its upper windows. The light vanished, re-appeared, and vanished again, in the fashion of these unearthly illuminations. These sinister intermissions had, probably, some connection with the opening and shutting of the infernal regions. The air-hole of a sepulchre has thus been seen to produce effects like those from a dark-lantern.

Suddenly a dark form, like that of a human being, ascended to one of the windows as if

from without, and plunged into the interior of the house.

To enter by the window is the custom with spirits.

The light was for a moment more brilliant, then went out, and appeared no more. The house became dark. The noises resembled voices. This is always the case. When there was anything to be seen it was silent. When all became invisible again, noises were heard.

There is a silence peculiar to night-time at sea. The repose of darkness is deeper on the water than on the land. When there is neither wind nor wave in that wild expanse, over which, in ordinary time, even the flight of eagles makes no sound, the movement of a fly could be heard. This sepulchral quiet gave a dismal relief to the noises which issued from the house.

‘Let us look,’ said the French boy.

And he made a step towards the house.

The others were so frightened, that they

resolved to follow him. They did not dare even to run away alone.

Just as they had passed a heap of faggots, which for some mysterious reason seemed to inspire them with a little courage in that solitude, a white owl flew towards them from a bush. The owls have a suspicious sort of flight, a sidelong skim which is suggestive of mischief afloat. The bird passed near the boys, fixing upon them its round eyes, bright amidst the darkness.

A shudder ran through the group behind the French boy.

He looked up at the owl, and said—

‘Too late, my bird ; I *will* look.’

And he advanced.

The crackling sound made by his thick-nailed boots among the furze-bushes, did not prevent his hearing the noise in the house, which rose and fell with the continuousness and the calm accent of a dialogue.

A moment afterwards, the boy added—

‘Besides, it is only fools who believe in spirits.’

Insolence in the face of danger rallies the cowardly, and inspirits them to go on.

The two Torteval lads resumed their march, quickening their steps behind the caulker's apprentice.

The haunted house seemed to them to grow larger before their eyes. This optical illusion of fear is founded in reality. The house did indeed grow larger, for they were coming nearer to it.

Meanwhile the voices in the house took a tone more and more distinct. The children listened. The ear, too, has its power of exaggerating. It was different to a murmur, more than a whispering, less than an uproar. Now and then one or two words, clearly articulated, could be caught. These words, impossible to be understood, sounded strangely. The boys stopped and listened; then went forward again.

'It's the ghosts talking,' said the caulker's apprentice; 'but I don't believe in ghosts.'

The Torteval boys were sorely tempted to

shrink behind the heap of faggots, but they had already left it far behind ; and their friend the caulker continued to advance towards the house. They trembled at remaining with him ; but they dared not leave him.

Step by step, and perplexed, they followed. The caulker's apprentice turned towards them and said—

‘ You know it isn't true. There are no such things.’

The house grew taller and taller. The voices became more and more distinct.

They drew nearer.

And now they could perceive within the house something like a muffled light. It was a faint glimmer, like one of those effects produced by dark-lanterns, already referred to, and which are common at the midnight meetings of witches.

When they were close to the house they halted.

One of the two Torteval boys ventured on an observation :

‘ It isn’t spirits: it is ladies dressed in white.’

‘ What’s that hanging from the window?’ asked the other.

‘ It looks like a rope.’

‘ It’s a snake.’

‘ It is only cords hanging there,’ said the French boy, authoritatively. ‘ It is their way of getting up. Only I don’t believe in them.’

And in three bounds, rather than steps, he found himself against the wall of the building.

The two others, trembling, imitated him, and came pressing against him, one on his right side, the other on his left. The boys applied their ears to the wall. The sounds continued.

The following was the conversation of the phantoms :—

‘ Asi, entendido esta?’

‘ Entendido.’

‘ So that is understood?’

‘ Perfectly.’

‘Dicho?’

‘*Dicho.*’

‘Aqui esperara un hombre, y podra marcharse en Inglaterra con Blasquito.’

‘Pagando?’

‘Pagando.’

‘Blasquito tomara al hombre en su barca.’

‘Sin buscar para conocer a su pais?’

‘No nos toca.’

‘Ni a su nombre del hombre?’

‘As is arranged?’

‘As is arranged.’

‘A man will wait here, and can accompany Blasquito to England.’

‘Paying the expense?’

‘Paying the expense.’

‘Blasquito will take the man in his bark.’

‘Without seeking to know what country he belongs to?’

‘That is no business of ours.’

‘Without asking his name?’

‘No se pide el nombre, pero se pesa la bolsa.’

‘Bien : esperara el hombre en esa casa.’

‘Tenga que comer.’

‘Tendra.’

‘Onde ?’

‘En este saco que he llevado.’

‘Muy bien.’

‘Puedo dexar el saco aqui ?’

‘Los contrabandistas no son ladrones.’

‘Y vosotros, cuando marchais ?’

‘We do not ask for names ; we only feel the weight of the purse.’

‘Good : the man shall wait in this house.’

‘He must have provisions.’

‘He will be furnished with them.’

‘How ?’

‘From this bag which I have brought.’

‘Very good.’

‘Can I leave this bag here ?’

‘Smugglers are not robbers.’

‘And when do you go ?’

‘Mañana por la mañana. Si su hombre de usted parado, podria venir con nosotros.’

‘Parado no esta.’

‘Hacienda suya.’

‘Cuantos dias esperara alli?’

‘Dos, tres, quatro dias; menos o mas.’

‘Es cierto que el Blasquito vendra?’

‘Cierto.’

‘En est Plainmont.’

‘En est Plainmont.’

‘To-morrow morning. If your man was ready he could come with us.’

‘He is not prepared.’

‘That is his affair.’

‘How many days will he have to wait in this house?’

‘Two, three, or four days; more or less.’

‘Is it certain that Blasquito will come?’

‘Certain.’

‘Here to Pleinmont?’

‘To Pleinmont.’

‘ A qual semana ? ’

‘ La que viene. ’

‘ A qual dia ? ’

‘ Viernes, o sabado, o domingo. ’

‘ No puede faltar ? ’

‘ Es mi tocayo. ’

‘ Por cualquiera tiempo viene ? ’

‘ Cualquiera. No tieme. Soy el Blasco, es el Blasquito. ’

‘ Asi, no puede faltar de venir en Guernsey ? ’

‘ When ? ’

‘ Next week. ’

‘ What day ? ’

‘ Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. ’

‘ May he not fail ? ’

‘ He is my Tocayo. ’

‘ Will he come in any weather ? ’

‘ At any time. He has no fear. My name is Blasco, his Blasquito. ’

‘ So he cannot fail to come to Guernsey ? ’

‘Vengo a un mes, y viene al otro mes.’

‘Entiendo.’

‘A contar del otro sabado, desde hoy en ocho, no se pasaran cinco dias sin que venga el Blasquito.’

‘Pero un muy malo mar?’

‘Egurraldia gaiztoa.’

‘Si.’

‘No vendria el Blasquito tan pronto, pero vendria.’

‘I come one month—he the other.’

‘I understand.’

‘Counting from Saturday last, one week from to-day; five days cannot elapse without bringing Blasquito.’

‘But if there is much sea?’

‘Bad weather?’

‘Yes.’

‘Blasquito will not come so quickly, but he will come.’

‘Donde vendra?’

‘De Vilvaó.’

‘Onde ira?’

‘En Portland.’

‘Bien.’

‘O en Tor Bay.’

‘Mejor.’

‘Su humbre de usted puede estarse quieto.’

‘No traidor sera, el Blasquito?’

‘Los cobardes son traidores. Somos va-

‘Whence will he come?’

‘From Bilbao.’

‘Where will he be going?’

‘To Portland.’

‘Good.’

‘Or to Torbay.’

‘Better still.’

‘Your man may rest easy.’

‘Blasquito will betray nothing?’

‘Cowards are the only traitors. We are

lientes. El mar es la iglesia del invierno. La traicion es la iglesia del infierno.'

'No se entiende a lo que dicemos?'

'Escuchar a nosotros y mirar a nosotros es imposible. La espanta hace alli el desierto.'

'Lo sè.'

'Quien se atravesaria a escuchar?'

'Es verdad.'

'Y escucharian que no entiendrian. Hablamos a una lengua fiera y nuestra que no se

men of courage. The sea is the church of winter. 'Treason is the church of hell.'

'No one hears what we say?'

'It is impossible to be seen or overheard. The people's fear of this spot makes it deserted.

'I know it.'

'Who is there who would dare to listen here?'

'True.'

'Besides, if they listened, none would understand. We speak a wild language of our own,

conoce. Despues que la sabeis, eries con nosotros.'

'Soy viendo para componer las haciendas con ustedes.'

'Bueno.'

'Y allora me voy.'

'Mucho.'

'Digame usted, hombre. Si el pasagero quiere que el Blasquito le lleven en unguina otra parte que Portland o Tor Bay?'

which nobody knows hercabouts. As you know it, you are one of us.'

'I came only to make these arrangements with you.'

'Very good.'

'I must now take my leave.'

'Be it so.'

'Tell me; suppose the passenger should wish Blasquito to take him anywhere else than to Portland or Torbay?'

‘Tenga onces.’

‘El Blasquito hara lo que querra el hombre?’

‘El Blasquito hace lo que quieren las onces.’

‘Es menester mucho tiempo para ir en Tor Bay?’

‘Como quiere el viento.’

‘Ocho horas?’

‘Menos, o mas.’

‘El Blasquito obedecera al pasagero?’

‘Si le obedece el mar al Blasquito.’

‘Let him bring some gold coins.’

‘Will Blasquito consult the stranger’s convenience?’

‘Blasquito will do whatever the gold coins command.’

‘Does it take long to go to Torbay?’

‘That is as it pleases the winds.’

‘Eight hours?’

‘More or less.’

‘Will Blasquito obey the passenger?’

‘If the sea will obey Blasquito.’

‘Bien pagado sera.’

‘El oro es el oro. El viento es el viento.’

‘Mucho.’

‘El hombre hace lo que puede con el oro.
Dios con el viento hace lo que quiere.’

‘Aqui sera viernes el que desea marcharse
con Blasquito.’

‘Pues.’

‘A qual momento llega Blasquito?’

‘A la noche. A la noche se llega, a la noche

‘He will be well rewarded.’

‘Gold is gold; and the sea is the sea.’

‘That is true.’

‘Man with his gold does what he can.
Heaven with its winds does what it will.’

‘The man who is to accompany Blasquito
will be here on Friday.’

‘Good.’

‘At what hour will Blasquito appear.

‘In the night. We arrive by night; and
sail by night. We have a wife who is called

se marcha. Tenemos una muger quien se llama el mar, y una quien se llama la noche.'

'La muger puede faltar, la hermana no.'

'Todo dicho esta. Abour, hombres.'

'Buenas tardes. Un golpe de aquardiente?'

'Gracias.'

'Es mejor que xarope.'

'Tengo vuestra palabra.'

'Mi nombre es Pundonor.'

'Sea usted con Dois.'

'Ereis gentleman, y soy caballero.'

the sea, and a sister called night. The wife betrays sometimes; but the sister never.'

'All is settled, then. Good-night, my men.'

'Good-night. A drop of brandy first?'

'Thank you.'

'That is better than a syrup.'

'I have your word.'

'My name is Point-of-Honour.'

'Adieu.'

'You are a gentleman: I am a caballero.'

It was clear that only devils could talk in this way. The children did not listen long. This time they took to flight in earnest; the French boy, convinced at last, running even quicker than the others.

On the Tuesday following this Saturday, Sieur Clubin returned to St. Malo, bringing back the *Durande*.

The ‘*Tamaulipas*’ was still at anchor in the roads.

Sieur Clubin, between the whiffs of his pipe, said to the landlord of the Jean Auberge :

‘Well; and when does the “*Tamaulipas*” get under way?’

‘The day after to-morrow—Thursday,’ replied the landlord.

On that evening, Clubin supped at the coast-guard officers’ table; and contrary to his habit, went out after his supper. The consequence of his absence was, that he could not attend to the office of the *Durande*, and thus lost a little in the matter of freights.

This fact was remarked in a man ordinarily punctual.

It appeared that he had chatted a few moments with his friend the money-changer.

He returned two hours after Noguette had sounded the Curfew bell. The Brazilian bell sounds at ten o'clock. It was therefore midnight.

VI.

THE JACRESSADE.

FORTY years ago, St. Malo possessed an alley known by the name of the ‘ruelle Coutanchez.’ This alley no longer exists, having been removed for the improvements of the town.

It was a double row of houses, leaning one towards the other, and leaving between them just room enough for a narrow rivulet, which was called the street. By stretching the legs, it was possible to walk on both sides of the

little stream, touching with head or elbows, as you went, the houses either on the right or the left. These old relics of mediæval Normandy have almost a human interest. Tumble-down houses and sorcerers always go together. Their leaning stories, their over-hanging walls, their bowed penthouses, and their old thick-set irons, seem like lips, chin, nose, and eyebrows. The garret window is the blind eye. The walls are the wrinkled and blotchy cheeks. The opposite houses lay their foreheads together as if they were plotting some malicious deed. All those words of ancient villany—like ‘cut-throat,’ ‘slit-weazand,’ and the like—are closely connected with architecture of this kind.

One of these houses in the alley—the largest and the most famous, or notorious—was known by the name of the Jacressade.

The Jacressade was a lodging-house for people who do not lodge. In all towns, and particularly in sea-ports, there is always found beneath the lowest stratum of society a sort of residuum: vagabonds who are more than

a match for justice; rovers after adventures; chemists of the swindling order, who are always dropping their lives into the melting-pot; people in rags of every shape, and in every style of wearing them; withered fruits of roguery; bankrupt existences; consciences that have filed their schedule; men who have failed in the house-breaking trade (for the great masters of burglary move in a higher sphere); workmen and workwomen in the trade of wickedness; oddities, male and female; men in coats out at elbows; scoundrels reduced to indigence; rogues who have missed the wages of roguery; men who have been hit in the social duel; harpies who have no longer any prey; petty larceners; *gueux* in the double and unhappy meaning of that word. Such are the constituents of that living mass. Human nature is here reduced to something bestial. It is the refuse of the social state, heaped up in an obscure corner, where from time to time descends that dreaded broom which is known by the name of police.

In St. Malo, the Jacressade was the name of this corner.

It is not in dens of this sort that we find the high-class criminals—the robbers, forgers, and other great products of ignorance and poverty. If murder is represented here, it is generally in the person of some coarse drunkard; in the matter of robbery, the company rarely rise higher than the mere sharper. The vagrant is there; but not the highwayman. It would not, however, be safe to trust this distinction. This last stage of vagabondage may have its extremes of scoundrelism. It was on an occasion, when casting their nets into the Epi-scié, which was in Paris what the Jacressade was in St. Malo—that the police captured the notorious Lacenaire.

These lurking-places refuse nobody. To fall in the social scale has a tendency to bring men to one level. Sometimes honesty in tatters found itself there. Virtue and probity have been known before now to be brought to strange passes. We must not judge always

by appearances, even in the palace or at the galleys. Public respect, as well as universal reprobation, requires testing. Surprising results sometimes spring from this principle. An angel may be discovered in the stews; a pearl in the dunghill. Such sad and dazzling discoveries are not altogether unknown.

The Jacressade was rather a courtyard than a house; and more of a well than a courtyard. It had no stories looking on the street. Its façade was simply a high wall, with a low gateway. You raised the latch, pushed the gate, and were at once in the court-yard.

In the midst of this yard might be perceived a round hole, encircled with a margin of stones, and even with the ground. The yard was small, the well large. A broken pavement surrounded it.

The courtyard was square, and built on three sides only. On the side of the street was only the wall; facing you as you entered the gateway stood the house, the two wings of which formed the sides to right and left.

Anyone entering there after nightfall, at his own risk and peril, would have heard a confused murmur of voices ; and, if there had been moonlight or starlight enough to give shape to the obscure forms before his eyes, this is what he would have seen.

The courtyard: the well. Around the courtyard, in front of the gate, a lean-to or shed, in a sort of horse-shoe form, but with square corners ; a rotten gallery, with a roof of joists supported by stone pillars at unequal distances. In the centre, the well ; around the well, upon a litter of straw, a kind of circular chaplet, formed of the soles of boots and shoes ; some trodden down at heel, some showing the toes of the wearers, some the naked heels. The feet of men, women, and children, all asleep.

Beyond these feet, the eye might have distinguished, in the shadow of the shed, bodies, drooping heads, forms stretched out lazily, bundles of rags of both sexes, a promiscuous assemblage, a strange and revolting mass of life. The accommodation of this sleeping chamber was

open to all, at the rate of two sous a week. On a stormy night the rain fell upon the feet, the whirling snow settled on the bodies of those wretched sleepers.

Who were these people? The unknown. They came there at night, and departed in the morning. Creatures of this kind form part of the social fabric. Some stole in during the darkness, and paid nothing. The greater part had scarcely eaten during the day. All kinds of vice and baseness, every sort of moral infection, every species of distress were there. The same sleep settled down upon all in this bed of filth. The dreams of all these companions in misery went on side by side. A dismal meeting-place, where misery and weakness, half-sobered debauchery, weariness from long walking to and fro, with evil thoughts, in quest of bread, pallor with closed eyelids, remorse, envy, lay mingled and festering in the same miasma, with faces that had the look of death, and dishevelled hair mixed with the filth and sweepings of the streets. Such was the putrid

heap of life fermenting in this dismal spot. An unlucky turn of the wheel of fortune, a ship arrived on the day before, a discharge from prison, a dark night, or some other chance, had cast them here, to find a miserable shelter. Every day brought some new accumulation of such misery. Let him enter who would, sleep who could, speak who dared ; for it was a place of whispers. The new comers hastened to bury themselves in the mass, or tried to seek oblivion in sleep, since there was none in the darkness of the place. They snatched what little of themselves they could from the jaws of death. They closed their eyes in that confusion of horrors which every day renewed. They were the embodiment of misery, thrown off from society, as the scum is from the sea.

It was not everyone who could even get a share of the straw. More than one figure was stretched out naked upon the flags. They lay down worn out with weariness, and awoke paralysed. The well, without lid or parapet, and thirty feet in depth, gaped open night and

day. Rain fell around it; filth accumulated about, and the gutters of the yard ran down and filtered through its sides. The pail for drawing the water stood by the side. Those who were thirsty drank there; some, disgusted with life, drowned themselves in it—slipped from their slumber in the filthy shed into that profounder sleep. In the year 1819, the body of a boy, of fourteen years old, was taken up out of this well.

To be safe in this house, it was necessary to be of the 'right sort.' The uninitiated were regarded with suspicion.

Did these miserable wretches, then, know each other? No; yet they scented out the genuine guest of the *Jacressade*.

The mistress of the house was a young and rather pretty woman, wearing a cap trimmed with ribbons. She washed herself now and then with water from the well. She had a wooden leg.

At break of day, the courtyard became empty. Its inmates dispersed.

An old cock and some other fowls were kept

in the courtyard, where they raked among the filth of the place all day long. A long horizontal beam, supported by posts, traversed the yard — a gibbet-shaped erection, not out of keeping with the associations of the place. Sometimes on the morrow of a rainy day, a silk dress, mudded and wet, would be seen hanging out to dry upon this beam. It belonged to the woman with the wooden leg.

Over the shed, and like it, surrounding the yard, was a storey, and above this storey a loft. A rotten wooden ladder, passing through a hole in the roof of the shed, conducted to this storey ; and up this ladder the woman would climb, sometimes staggering while its crazy rounds creaked beneath her.

The occasional lodgers, whether by the week or the night, slept in the courtyard ; the regular inmates lived in the house.

Windows without a pane of glass, door-frames with no door, fireplaces without stoves ; such were the chief features of the interior. You might pass from one room to

the other, indifferently, by a long square aperture which had been the door, or by a triangular hole between the joists of the partitions. The fallen plaster of the ceiling lay about the floor. It was difficult to say how the old house still stood erect. The high winds indeed shook it. The lodgers ascended as they could by the worn and slippery steps of the ladder. Everything was open to the air. The wintry atmosphere was absorbed into the house, like water into a sponge. The multitude of spiders seemed alone to guarantee the place against falling to pieces immediately. There was no sign of furniture. Two or three paillasses were in the corner, their ticking torn in parts, and showing more dust than straw within. Here and there were a water-pot and an earthen pipkin. A close, disagreeable odour haunted the rooms.

The windows looked out upon the square yard. The scene was like the interior of a scavenger's cart. The things, not to speak of the human beings, which lay rusting, mouldering, and putrifying there, were indescribable. The

fragments seemed to fraternize together. Some fell from the walls, others from the living tenants of the place. The débris were sown with their tatters.

Besides the floating population which bivouacked nightly in the square yard, the Jaques-sade had three permanent lodgers—a charcoal-man, a rag-picker, and a ‘gold-maker.’ The charcoal-man and the rag-picker occupied two of the paillasses of the first storey; the ‘gold-maker,’ a chemist, lodged in the loft, which was called, no one knew why, the garret. Nobody knew where the woman slept. The ‘gold-maker’ was a poet in a small way. He inhabited a room in the roof, under the tiles—a chamber with a narrow window, and a large stone fireplace forming a gulf, in which the wind howled at will. The garret window having no frame, he had nailed across it a piece of iron sheathing, part of the wreck of a ship. This sheathing left little room for the entrance of light, and much for the entrance of cold. The charcoal-man paid rent from time to time

in the shape of a sack of charcoal ; the rag-picker paid with a bowl of grain for the fowls every week ; the ‘gold-maker’ did not pay at all. Meanwhile the latter consumed the very house itself for fuel. He had pulled down the little wood-work which remained ; and every now and then he took from the wall or the roof a lath or some scantling, to heat his crucible. Upon the partition, above the rag-picker’s mattress, might have been seen two columns of figures, marked in chalk by the rag-picker himself from week to week—a column of threes, and a column of fives—according as the bowl of grain had cost him three liards or five centimes. The goldpot of the ‘chemist’ was an old fragment of a bomb-shell, promoted by him to the dignity of a crucible, in which he mixed his ingredients. The transmutation of metals absorbed all his thoughts. He was determined before he died to revenge himself by breaking the windows of orthodox science with the real philosopher’s stone. His furnace consumed a good deal of wood. The handrail of

the stairs had disappeared. The house was slowly burning away. The landlady said to him, ‘ You will leave us nothing but the shell.’ He mollified her by addressing her in verses.

Such was the *Jacressade*.

A boy of twelve, or, perhaps, sixteen—for he was like a dwarf, with a large wen upon his neck, and always carrying a broom in his hand—was the domestic of the place.

The habitués entered by the gateway of the courtyard; the public entered by the shop.

In the high wall, facing the street, and to the right of the entrance to the courtyard, was a square opening, serving at once as a door and a window. This was the shop. The square opening had a shutter and a frame—the only shutter in all the house which had hinges and bolts. Behind this square aperture, which was open to the street, was a little room, a compartment obtained by curtailing the sleeping shed in the courtyard. Over the door, passers-by read the inscription in charcoal, ‘ Curiosities sold here.’ On three boards, forming the shop front,

were several china pots without ears, a Chinese parasol made of gold-beaters' skin, and ornamented with figures, torn here and there, and impossible to open or shut; fragments of iron, and shapeless pieces of old pottery, and dilapidated hats and bonnets; three or four shells, some packets of old bone and metal buttons, a tobacco-box with a portrait of Marie-Antoinette, and a dog's-eared volume of Boisbertrand's Algebra. Such was the stock of the shop; this assortment completed the 'curiosities.' The shop communicated by a back door with the yard in which was the well. It was furnished with a table and a stool. The woman with a wooden leg presided at the counter.

VII.

NOCTURNAL BUYERS AND MYSTERIOUS SELLERS.

C LUBIN had been absent from the Jean Auberge all the evening of Tuesday. On the Wednesday night he was absent again.

In the dusk of that evening, two strangers penetrated into the mazes of the ruelle Coutanchez. They stopped in front of the Jacressade. One of them knocked at the window ; the door of the shop opened, and they entered. The woman with the wooden-leg met them with

the smile which she reserved for respectable citizens. There was a candle on the table.

The strangers were, in fact, respectable citizens. The one who had knocked, said, 'Good day, mistress. I have come for that affair.'

The woman with the wooden-leg smiled again, and went out by the back door leading to the court-yard, and where the well was. A moment afterwards the back door was opened again, and a man stood in the doorway. He wore a cap and a blouse. It was easy to see the shape of something under his blouse. He had bits of old straw in his clothes and looked as if he had just been aroused from sleep.

He advanced and exchanged glances with the strangers. The man in the blouse looked puzzled, but cunning; he said—

'You are the gunsmith?'

The one who had tapped at the window replied—

'Yes; you are the man from Paris?'

'Known as Redskin. Yes.'

‘Show me the thing.’

The man took from under his blouse a weapon extremely rare at that period in Europe. It was a revolver.

The weapon was new and bright. The two strangers examined it. The one who seemed to know the house, and whom the man in the blouse had called ‘the gunsmith,’ tried the mechanism. He passed the weapon to the other, who appeared less at home there, and kept his back turned to the light.

The gunsmith continued—

‘How much?’

The man in the blouse replied—

‘I have just brought it from America. Some people bring monkeys, parrots, and other animals, as if the French people were savages. For myself I brought this. It is a useful invention.’

‘How much?’ inquired the gunsmith again.

‘It is a pistol which turns and turns.’

How much?’

‘Bang! the first fire. Bang! the second

fire. Bang! the third fire. What a hailstorm of bullets? That will do some execution.'

'The price?'

'There are six barrels.'

'Well, well, what do you want for it?'

'Six barrels; that is six Louis.'

'Will you take five?'

'Impossible. One Louis a ball. That is the price.'

'Come, let us do business together. Be reasonable.'

'I have named a fair price. Examine the weapon, Mr. Gunsmith.'

'I have examined it.'

'The barrel twists and turns like Talleyrand himself. The weapon ought to be mentioned in the 'Dictionary of Weathercocks.' It is a gem.'

'I have looked at it.'

'The barrels are of Spanish make.'

'I see they are.'

'They are twisted. This is how this twisting is done. They empty into a forge the

basket of a collector of old iron. They fill it full of these old scraps, with old nails, and broken horseshoes swept out of farriers' shops.'

'And old sickle-blades.'

'I was going to say so, Mr. Gunsmith. They apply to all this rubbish a good sweating heat, and this makes a magnificent material for gun-barrels.'

'Yes; but it may have cracks, flaws, or crosses.'

'True; but they remedy the crosses by little twists, and avoid the risk of doublings by beating hard. They bring their mass of iron under the great hammer; give it two more good sweating heats. If the iron has been heated too much, they re-temper it with dull heats, and lighter hammers. And then they take out their stuff and roll it well; and with this iron they manufacture you a weapon like this.'

'You are in the trade, I suppose?'

'I am of all trades.'

'The barrels are pale coloured.'

‘That’s the beauty of them, Mr. Gunsmith. The tint is obtained with antimony.

‘It is settled, then, that we give you five Louis?’

‘Allow me to observe that I had the honour of saying six.’

The gunsmith lowered his voice.

‘Hark you, master. Take advantage of the opportunity. Get rid of this thing. A weapon of this kind is of no use to a man like you. It will make you remarked.’

‘It is very true,’ said the Parisian. ‘It is rather conspicuous. It is more suited to a gentleman.’

‘Will you take five Louis?’

‘No, six; one for every shot.’

‘Come, six Napoleons.’

‘I will have six Louis.’

You are not a Bonapartist, then. You prefer a Louis to a Napoleon.’

The Parisian nick-named ‘Redskin’ smiled.

‘A Napoleon is greater,’ said he, ‘but a Louis is worth more.’

‘Six Napolcons.’

‘Six Louis. It makes a difference to me of four-and-twenty francs.’

‘The bargain is off in that case.’

‘Good: I keep the toy.’

‘Keep it.’

‘Beating me down! a good idea! It shall never be said that I got rid like that of a wonderful specimen of ingenuity.’

‘Good night, then.’

It marks a whole stage in the progress of making pistols, which the Chesapeake Indians call Nortay-u-Hah.

‘Five Louis, ready money. Why, it is a handful of gold.’

‘Nortay-u-Hah,’ that signifies ‘short gun. A good many people don’t know that.’

‘Will you take five Louis, and just a bit of silver?’

‘I said six, master.’

The man who kept his back to the candle, and who had not yet spoken, was spending his time during the dialogue in turning and testing

the mechanism of the pistol. He approached the armourer's ear and whispered—

‘Is it a good weapon?’

‘Excellent.’

‘I will give the six Louis.’

Five minutes afterwards, while the Parisian, nick-named ‘Redskin,’ was depositing the six Louis which he had just received in a secret slit under the breast of his blouse, the armourer and his companion carrying the revolver in his trousers pocket, stepped out into the straggling street.

VIII.

A 'CANNON' OFF THE RED BALL AND THE
BLACK.

ON the morrow, which was a Thursday, a tragic circumstance occurred at a short distance from St. Malo, near the peak of the 'Décollé,' a spot where the cliff is high and the sea deep.

A line of rocks in the form of the top of a lance, and connecting themselves with the land by a narrow isthmus, stretch out there into the water, ending abruptly with a large peak-

shaped breaker. Nothing is commoner in the architecture of the sea. In attempting to reach the plateau of the peaked rock from the shore, it was necessary to follow an inclined plane, the ascent of which was here and there somewhat steep.

It was upon a plateau of this kind, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, that a man was standing, enveloped in a large military cape and armed; a fact easy to be perceived from certain straight and angular folds in his mantle. The summit on which this man was resting was a rather extensive platform, dotted with large masses of rock, like enormous paving-stones, leaving between them narrow passages. This platform, on which a kind of thick, short grass grew here and there, came to an end on the sea side in an open space, leading to a perpendicular escarpment. The escarpment, rising about sixty feet above the level of the sea, seemed cut down by the aid of a plumb-line. Its left angle, however, was broken away, and formed one of those natural staircases common

to granite cliffs worn by the sea, the steps of which are somewhat inconvenient, requiring sometimes the strides of a giant or the leaps of an acrobat. These stages of rock descended perpendicularly to the sea, where they were lost. It was a break-neck place. However, in case of absolute necessity, a man might succeed in embarking there, under the very wall of the cliff.

A breeze was sweeping the sea. The man, wrapped in his cape and standing firm, with his left hand grasping his right shoulder, closed one eye, and applied the other to a telescope. He seemed absorbed in anxious scrutiny. He had approached the edge of the escarpment, and stood there motionless, his gaze immovably fixed on the horizon. The tide was high; the waves were beating below against the foot of the cliffs.

The object which the stranger was observing was a vessel in the offing, and which was manœuvring in a strange manner. The vessel, which had hardly left the port of St. Malo an

hour, had stopped behind the Banquetiers. It had not cast anchor, perhaps because the bottom would only have permitted it to bear to leeward on the edge of the cable, and because the ship would have strained on her anchor under the cutwater. Her captain had contented himself with lying-to.

The stranger, who was a coast-guardman, as was apparent from his uniform cape, watched all the movements of the three-master, and seemed to note them mentally. The vessel was lying-to, a little off the wind, which was indicated by the backing of the small topsail, and the bellying of the main-topsail. She had squared the mizen, and set the topmast as close as possible, and in such a manner as to work the sails against each other, and to make little way either on or off shore. Her captain evidently did not care to expose his vessel much to the wind, for he had only braced up the small mizen topsail. In this way, coming crossway on, he did not drift at the utmost more than half-a-league an hour.

It was still broad daylight, particularly on the open sea, and on the heights of the cliff. The shores below were becoming dark.

The coast-guardman, still engaged in his duty, and carefully scanning the offing, had not thought of observing the rocks at his side and at its feet. He turned his back towards the difficult sort of causeway which formed the communication between his resting-place and the shore. He did not, therefore, remark that something was moving in that direction. Behind a fragment of rock, among the steps of that causeway, something like the figure of a man had been concealed, according to all appearances, since the arrival of the coast-guardman. From time to time a head issued from the shadow behind the rock ; looked up and watched the watcher. The head, surmounted by a wide-brimmed American hat, was that of the Quaker-looking man, who, ten days before, was talking among the stones of the Petit-Bey to Captain Zuela.

Suddenly, the curiosity of the coast-guard-

man seemed to be still more strongly awakened. He polished the glass of his telescope quickly with his sleeve, and brought it to bear closely upon the three-master.

A little black spot seemed to detach itself from her side.

The black spot, looking like a small insect upon the water, was a boat.

The boat seemed to be making for the shore. It was manned by several sailors, who were pulling vigorously.

She pulled crosswise by little and little, and appeared to be approaching the *Pointe du Décollé*.

The gaze of the coast-guardman seemed to have reached its most intense point. No movement of the boat escaped it. He had approached nearer still to the verge of the rock.

At that instant a man of large stature appeared on one of the rocks behind him. It was the Quaker. The officer did not see him.

The man paused an instant, his arms at his

sides, but with his fists doubled ; and with the eye of a hunter, watching for his prey, he observed the back of the officer.

Four steps only separated them. He put one foot forward, then stopped ; took a second step, and stopped again. He made no movement except the act of walking : all the rest of his body was motionless as a statue. His foot fell upon the tufts of grass without noise. He made a third step, and paused again. He was almost within reach of the coast-guard, who stood there still motionless with his telescope. The man brought his two closed fists to a level with his collar-bone, then struck out his arms sharply, and his two fists, as if thrown from a sling, struck the coast-guardman on the two shoulders. The shock was decisive. The coast-guardman had not the time to utter a cry. He fell head first from the height of the rock into the sea. His boots appeared in the air about the time occupied by a flash of lightning. It was like the fall of a stone in the sea, which instantly closed over him.

Two or three circles widened out upon the dark water.

Nothing remained but the telescope, which had dropped from the hands of the man, and lay upon the turf.

The Quaker leaned over the edge of the escarpment a moment, watched the circles vanishing on the water, waited a few minutes, and then rose again, singing, in a low voice—

‘The captain of police is dead,
Through having lost his life.’

He knelt down a second time. Nothing reappeared. Only at the spot where the officer had been engulfed, he observed on the surface of the water a sort of dark spot, which became diffused with the gentle lapping of the waves. It seemed probable that the coast-guardman had fractured his skull against some rock under water, and that his blood caused the spot in the foam. The Quaker, while considering the meaning of this spot, began to sing again

‘Not very long before he died,
The luckless man was still alive.’

He did not finish his song.

He heard an extremely soft voice behind him, which said :

‘Is that you, Rantaine? Good day. You have just killed a man!’

He turned. About fifteen paces behind him, in one of the passages between the rocks stood a little man holding a revolver in his hand

The Quaker answered :

‘As you see. Good day, Sieur Clubin.’

The little man started.

‘You know me?’

‘You knew me very well,’ replied Rantaine.

Meanwhile they could hear a sound of oars on the sea. It was the approach of the boat which the officer had observed.

Sieur Clubin said in a low tone, as if speaking to himself :

‘It was done quickly.’

‘What can I do to oblige you?’ asked Rantaine.

‘Oh, a trifling matter! It is very nearly ten years since I saw you. You must have been doing well. How are you?’

‘Well enough,’ answered Rantaine. ‘How are you?’

‘Very well,’ replied Clubin.

Rantaine advanced a step towards Clubin.

A little sharp click caught his ear. It was Sieur Clubin who was cocking his revolver.

‘Rantaine, there are about fifteen paces between us. It is a nice distance. Remain where you are.’

‘Very well,’ said Rantaine. ‘What do you want with me?’

‘I! Oh, I have come to have a chat with you.’

Rantaine did not offer to move again. Sieur Clubin continued:

‘You assassinated a coast-guardman just now.’

Rantaine lifted the flap of his hat, and replied:

‘You have already done me the honour to mention it.’

‘Exactly ; but in terms less precise. I said a man : I say now, a coast-guardman. The man wore the number 619. He was the father of a family ; leaves a wife and five children.’

‘That is no doubt correct,’ said Rantaine.

There was a momentary pause.

‘They are picked men—those coast-guard people,’ continued Clubin ; ‘almost all old sailors.’

‘I have remarked,’ said Rantaine, ‘that people generally do leave a wife and five children.’

Sieur Clubin continued :

‘Guess how much this revolver cost me ?’

‘It is a pretty tool,’ said Rantaine.

‘What do you guess it at ?’

‘I should guess it at a good deal.’

‘It cost me one hundred and forty-four francs.’

‘You must have bought that,’ said Rantaine, ‘at the shop in the ruelle Coutanchez.’

Clubin continued :

‘He did not cry out. The fall stopped his voice, no doubt.’

‘Sieur Clubin, there will be a breeze to-night.’

‘I am the only one in the secret.’

‘Do you still stay at the Jean Auberge?’

‘Yes: you are not badly served there.’

‘I remember getting some excellent sour-kROUT there.’

‘You must be exceedingly strong, Rantaine. What shoulders you have! I should be sorry to get a tap from you. I, on the other hand, when I came into the world, looked so spare and sickly, that they despaired of rearing me.’

‘They succeeded though; which was lucky.’

‘Yes: I still stay at the Jean Auberge.’

‘Do you know, Sieur Clubin, how I recognized you? It was from your having recognized me. I said to myself, there is nobody like Sieur Clubin for that.’

And he advanced a step.

‘Stand back where you were, Rantaine.’

Rantaine fell back, and said to himself:

‘A fellow becomes like a child before one of those weapons.’

Sieur Clubin continued :

‘The position of affairs is this : we have on our right, in the direction of St. Enogat, at about three hundred paces from here, another coast-guardman—his number is 618—who is still alive ; and on our left, in the direction of Saint Lunaire—a customs station. That makes seven armed men who could be here, if necessary, in five minutes. The rock would be surrounded ; the way hither guarded. Impossible to elude them. There is a corpse at the foot of this rock.’

Rantaine took a side-way glance at the revolver.

‘As you say, Rantaine, it is a pretty tool. Perhaps it is only loaded with powder ; but what does that matter ? A report would be enough to bring an armed force—and I have six barrels here.’

The measured sound of the oars became very distinct. The boat was not far off.

The tall man regarded the little man curiously. *Sieur Clubin* spoke in a voice more and more soft and subdued.

‘*Rantaine*, the men in the boat which is coming, knowing what you did here just now, would lend a hand and help to arrest you. You are to pay Captain *Zuela* ten thousand francs for your passage. You would have made a better bargain, by the way, with the smugglers of *Pleinmont*; but they would only have taken you to *England*; and besides, you cannot risk going to *Guernsey*, where they have the pleasure of knowing you. To return, then, to the position of affairs—if I fire, you are arrested. You are to pay *Zuela* for your passage ten thousand francs. You have already paid him five thousand in advance. *Zuela* would keep the five thousand and be gone. These are the facts. *Rantaine*, you have managed your masquerading very well. That hat—that queer coat—and those gaiters make a wonderful change. You forgot the spectacles; but you did right to let your whiskers grow.’

Rantaine smiled spasmodically. Clubin continued :

‘Rantaine, you have on a pair of American breeches, with a double fob. In one side you keep your watch. Take care of it.’

‘Thank you, *Sieur Clubin*.’

‘In the other is a little box made of wrought iron, which opens and shuts with a spring. It is an old sailor’s tobacco-box. Take it out of your pocket, and throw it over to me.’

‘Why ! this is robbery.’

‘You are at liberty to call the coast-guard-man.’

And Clubin fixed his eye on Rantaine.

‘Stay, *Mess Clubin*,’ said Rantaine, making a slight forward movement, and holding out his open hand.

The title ‘*Mess*’ was a delicate flattery.

‘Stay where you are, Rantaine.’

‘*Mess Clubin*, let us come to terms. I offer you half.’

Clubin crossed his arms, still showing the barrels of his revolver.

‘Rantaine, what do you take me for? I am an honest man.’

And he added, after a pause :

‘I must have the whole.’

Rantaine muttered between his teeth, ‘This fellow’s of a stern sort.’

The eye of Clubin lighted up, his voice became clear and sharp as steel. He cried :

‘I see that you are labouring under a mistake. Robbery is your name, not mine. My name is Restitution. Hark you, Rantaine. Ten years ago you left Guernsey one night, taking with you the cash-box of a certain partnership concern, containing fifty thousand francs which belonged to you, but forgetting to leave behind you fifty thousand francs which were the property of another. Those fifty thousand francs, the money of your partner, the excellent and worthy Mess Lethierry, make at present, at compound interest, calculated for ten years, eighty thousand six hundred and sixty-six francs. You went into a money-changer’s

yesterday. I'll give you his name—Rébuchet, in St. Vincent Street. You counted out to him seventy-six thousand francs in French bank-notes; in exchange for which he gave you three notes of the Bank of England for one thousand pounds sterling each, plus the exchange. You put these bank-notes in the iron tobacco-box, and the iron tobacco-box into your double fob on the right-hand side. On the part of Mess Lethierry, I shall be content with that. I start to-morrow for Guernsey, and intend to hand it to him. Rantaine, the three-master lying-to out yonder, is the 'Tamaulipas.' You have had your luggage put aboard there with the other things belonging to the crew. You want to leave France. You have your reasons. You are going to Arequipa. The boat is coming to fetch you. You are awaiting it. It is at hand. You can hear it. It depends on me whether you go or stay. No more words. Fling me the tobacco-box.'

Rantaine dipped his hand in the fob, drew out a little box, and threw it to Clubin. It was

the iron tobacco-box. It fell and rolled at Clubin's feet.

Clubin knelt without lowering his gaze; felt about for the box with his left hand, keeping all the while his eyes and the six barrels of the revolver fixed upon Rantaine.

Then he cried:

'Turn your back, my friend.'

Rantaine turned his back.

Sieur Clubin put the revolver under one arm, and touched the spring of the tobacco-box. The lid flew open.

It contained four bank notes; three of a thousand pounds, and one of ten pounds.

He folded up the three bank-notes of a thousand pounds each, replaced them in the iron tobacco-box, shut the lid again, and put it in his pocket.

Then he picked up a stone, wrapped it in the ten-pound note and said:

'You may turn round again.'

Rantaine turned.

Sieur Clubin continued:

‘I told you I would be contented with three thousand pounds. Here, I return you ten pounds.’

And he threw to Rantaine the note enfolding the stone.

Rantaine, with a movement of his foot, sent the bank-note and the stone into the sea.

‘As you please,’ said Clubin. ‘You must be rich. I am satisfied.’

The noise of oars, which had been continually drawing nearer during the dialogue, ceased. They knew by this that the boat had arrived at the base of the cliff.

‘Your vehicle waits below. You can go, Rantaine.’

Rantaine advanced towards the steps of stones, and rapidly disappeared.

Clubin moved cautiously towards the edge of the escarpment, and watched him descending.

The boat had stopped near the last stage of the rocks, at the very spot where the coast-guardman had fallen.

Still observing Rantaine stepping from stone to stone, Clubin muttered :

‘A good number 619. He thought himself alone. Rantaine thought there were only two there. I alone knew that there were three.’

He perceived at his feet the telescope which had dropped from the hands of the coast-guard-man.

The sound of oars was heard again. Rantaine had stepped into the boat, and the rowers had pushed out to sea.

When Rantaine was safely in the boat, and the cliff was beginning to recede from his eyes, he arose again abruptly. His features were convulsed with rage ; he clenched his fist and cried :

‘Ha ! he is the devil himself ; a villain !’

A few seconds later, Clubin, from the top of the rock, while bringing his telescope to bear upon the boat, heard distinctly the following words articulated by a loud voice, and mingling with the noise of the sea :

‘Sieur Clubin, you are an honest man ; but

you will not be offended if I write to Lethierry to acquaint him with this matter; and we have here in the boat a sailor from Guernsey, who is one of the crew of the 'Tamaulipas'; his name is Ahier-Tostevin, and he will return to St. Malo on Zuela's next voyage, to bear testimony to the fact of my having returned to you, on Mess Lethierry's account, the sum of three thousand pounds sterling.

It was Rantaine's voice.

Clubin rarely did things by halves. Motionless as the coast-guardman had been, and in the exact same place, his eye still at the telescope, he did not lose sight of the boat for one moment. He saw it growing less amidst the waves; watched it disappear and reappear, and approach the vessel, which was lying-to; finally he recognised the tall figure of Rantaine on the deck of the 'Tamaulipas.'

When the boat was raised, and slung again to the davits, the 'Tamaulipas' was in motion once more. The land breeze was fresh, and she spread all her sails. Clubin's glass con-

tinued fixed upon her outline growing more and more indistinct; until half-an-hour later, when the 'Tamaulipas' had become only a dark shape upon the horizon, growing smaller and smaller against the pale twilight in the sky.

IX.

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WHO EXPECT
OR FEAR THE ARRIVAL OF LETTERS FROM
BEYOND SEA.

ON that evening, Sieur Clubin returned late.

One of the causes of his delay was, that before going to his inn, he had paid a visit to the Dinan gate of the town, a place where there were several wine shops. In one of these wine shops, where he was not known, he had bought a bottle of brandy, which he

placed in the pocket of his overcoat, as if he desired to conceal it. Then, as the *Durande* was to start on the following morning, he had taken a turn abroad to satisfy himself that everything was in order.

When *Sieur Clubin* returned to the *Jean Auberge*, there was no one left in the lower room except the old sea captain, *M. Gertrais-Gabourreau*, who was drinking a jug of ale and smoking his pipe.

M. Gertrais-Gabourreau saluted *Sieur Clubin* between a whiff and a draught of ale.

‘How d’ye do, Captain *Clubin*?’

‘Good evening, Captain *Gertrais*.’

‘Well, the “*Tamaulipas*” is gone.’

‘Ah!’ said *Clubin*, ‘I did not observe.’

Captain *Gertrais-Gabourreau* expectorated, and said:

‘*Zuela* has decamped.’

‘When was that?’

‘This evening.’

‘Where is he gone?’

‘To the devil.’

‘No doubt; but where is that?’

‘To Arequipa.’

‘I knew nothing of it,’ said Clubin.

He added :

‘I am going to bed.’

He lighted his candle, walked towards the door and returned.

‘Have you ever been at Arequipa, Captain?’

‘Yes; some years ago.’

‘Where do they touch on that voyage?’

‘A little everywhere; but the “Tamaulipas” will touch nowhere.’

M. Gertrais-Gabourreau emptied his pipe upon the corner of a plate and continued :

‘You know the lugger called the “Trojan Horse,” and that fine three-master, the “Trente-mouzin,” which are gone to Cardiff. I was against their sailing on account of the weather. They have returned in a fine state. The lugger was laden with turpentine; she sprang a leak, and in working the pumps they pumped up with the water all her cargo. As to the three-master, she has suffered most above water. Her cutwater, her headrail, the stock of her

larboard anchor are broken. Her standing jibboom is gone clean by the cap. As for the jib-shrouds and bobstays, go and see what they look like. The mizenmast is not injured, but has had a severe shock. All the iron of the bowsprit has given way; and it is an extraordinary fact, that though the bowsprit itself is not scratched, it is completely stripped. The larboard-bow of the vessel is stove in a good three feet square. This is what comes of not taking advice.'

Clubin had placed the candle on the table, and had begun to re-adjust a row of pins which he kept in the collar of his overcoat. He continued:

'Didn't you say, Captain, that the "Tamaulipas" would not touch anywhere?'

'Yes; she goes direct to Chili.'

'In that case, she can send no news of herself on the voyage.'

'I beg your pardon, Captain Clubin. In the first place, she can send any letters by vessels she may meet sailing for Europe.'

‘That is true.’

‘Then there is the ocean letter-box.’

‘What do you mean by the ocean letter-box?’

‘Don’t you know what that is, Captain Clubin?’

‘No.’

‘When you pass the straits of Magellan—’

‘Well.’

‘Snow all around you; always bad weather; ugly down-easters, and bad seas.’

‘Well.’

‘When you have doubled Cape Monmouth—’

‘Well, what next?’

‘Then you double Cape Valentine.’

‘And then?’

‘Why, then you double Cape Isidore.’

‘And afterwards?’

‘You double Point Anne.’

‘Good. But what is it you call the ocean letter-box?’

‘We are coming to that. Mountains on the right, mountains on the left. Penguins and

stormy petrels all about. A terrible place. Ah! by Jove, what a howling and what cracks you get there! The hurricane wants no help. That's the place for holding on to the sheer-rails; for reefing topsails. That's where you take in the mainsail, and fly the jibsail; or take in the jibsail and try the stormjib. Gusts upon gusts! And then, sometimes four, five, or six days of scudding under bare poles. Often only a rag of canvas left. What a dance! Squalls enough to make a three-master skip like a flea. I saw once a cabin-boy hanging on to the jibboom of an English brig, "The 'True Blue,'" knocked, jibboom and all, to ten thousand nothings. Fellows are swept into the air there like butter-flies. I saw the second mate of the "Revenue," a pretty schooner, knocked from under the fore cross-tree, and killed dead. I have had my sheer-rails smashed, and come out with all my sails in ribbons. Frigates of fifty guns make water like wicker baskets. And the damnable coast! Nothing can be imagined more dangerous. Rocks all jagged edged. You come, by and

by, to Port Famine. There it's worse and worse. The worst seas I ever saw in my life. The devil's own latitudes. All of a sudden you spy the words, painted in red, "Post Office."

'What do you mean, Captain Gertrais?'

'I mean, Captain Clubin, that immediately after doubling Point Anne you see, on a rock, a hundred feet high, a great post with a barrel suspended to the top. This barrel is the letter-box. The English sailors must needs go and write up there "Post Office." What had they to do with it? It is the ocean post-office. It isn't the property of that worthy gentleman, the King of England. The box is common to all. It belongs to every flag. *Post Office*: there's a crack-jaw word for you. It produces an effect on me as if the devil had suddenly offered me a cup of tea. I will tell you now how the postal arrangements are carried out. Every vessel which passes sends to the post a boat with despatches. A vessel coming from the Atlantic, for instance, sends there its letters

for Europe ; and a ship coming from the Pacific, its letters for New Zealand or California. The officer in command of the boat puts his packet into the barrel, and takes away any packet he finds there. You take charge of these letters, and the ship which comes after you takes charge of yours. As ships are always going to and fro, the continent whence you come is that to which I am going. I carry your letters; you carry mine. The barrel is made fast to the post with a chain. And it rains, snows and hails! A pretty sea. The imps of Satan fly about on every side. The "Tamaulipas" will pass there. The barrel has a good lid with a hinge, but no padlock. You see, a fellow can write to his friends this way. The letters come safely.'

'It is very curious,' muttered Clubin thoughtfully.

Captain Gertrai-Gabourreau returned to his bottle of ale.

'If that vagabond Zuela should write' (continued Clubin aside), 'the scoundrel puts his

scrawl into the barrel at Magellan, and in four months I have his letter.'

'Well, Captain Clubin, do you start to-morrow?'

Clubin, absorbed in a sort of somnambulism, did not notice the question; and Captain Gertrais repeated it.

Clubin woke up.

'Of course, Captain Gertrais. It is my day. I must start to-morrow morning.'

'If it was my case, I shouldn't, Captain Clubin. The hair of the dog's coat feels damp. For two nights past, the sea-birds have been flying wildly round the lanthorn of the lighthouse. A bad sign. I have a storm-glass, too, which gives me a warning. The moon is at her second quarter; it is the maximum of humidity. I noticed to-day some pimpernels with their leaves shut, and a field of clover with its stalks all stiff. The worms come out of the ground to-day; the flies sting; the bees keep close to their hives; the sparrows chatter together. You can hear the sound of bells from far off.

I heard to-night the Angelus at St. Lunaire. And then the sun set angry. There will be a good fog to-morrow, mark my words. I don't advise you to put to sea. I dread the fog a good deal more than a hurricane. It's a nasty neighbour that.'

END OF VOL. I.

